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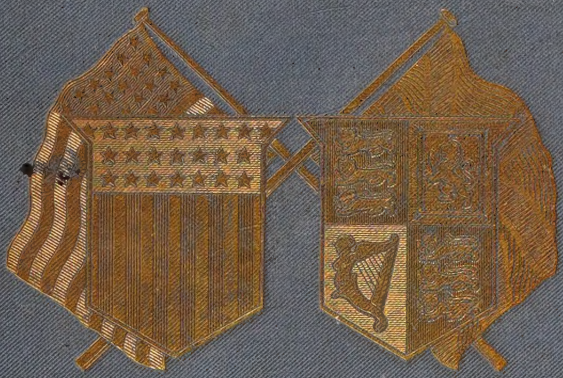

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HENRY IRVING'S IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICA.

HENRY IRVING'S IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICA,

NARRATED IN A

SERIES OF SKETCHES, CHRONICLES, AND CONVERSATIONS.

BY

JOSEPH HATTON,

AUTHOR OF "CLYTIE," "CRUEL LONDON," "THREE RECRUITS," "JOURNALISTIC LONDON," "TO-DAY IN AMERICA," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

London:
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,
CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET.
1884.

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WI...WN

PRESENTED

BY

Mr. Henry Thomas Hall

1885

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TO THE ENGLISH PUBLIC.

The interest taken by you in our American experiences has been made manifest to us in many ways on this side of the Atlantic. We have received the "God speed" of friends and associates, and a record of our trip will, I believe, be interesting to many.

My own share in this book is but small ; and to my friend, Joseph Hatton, belongs whatever credit there may be in it. It will, I hope, be accepted only for what it professes to be,—a series of sketches, chronicles, and conversations regarding a tour which the American people made for us, by their welcome and by their bounteous hospitality, a delightful progress.

In our intercourse with our friends, old and new, throughout the United States, nothing has impressed us more than their fondness for the old country. The greetings which we have every-

where received we take to be as much a token of the love of Americans for the English people, as an expression of personal good-feeling toward ourselves.

HENRY IRVING.

New York, April 30, 1884.

TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC.

This book is the outcome of a desire to chronicle, in a lasting form, some of the events of a tour which your kindness has made a delight to Ellen Terry and myself. Before leaving London I ventured upon a prophecy that in journeying to America we were going amongst friends. That prophecy has been fulfilled.

In the history of the stage the Lyceum Company is the first complete organization which has crossed the Atlantic with the entire equipment of a theatre.

As the tour is, I believe, unique, so also is this record of it; and I particularly desire to emphasize a fact concerning its authorship. I am, myself, only responsible for my share in the conversations and dialogues that are set down, everything else

being the work of my friend, Joseph Hatton, well known to you as the author of "To-day in America."

I can but trust that I have not erred in expressing, for publication, some passing thoughts about a country which has excited my profound admiration, and which has the highest claims upon my gratitude.

HENRY IRVING.

New York, April 30, 1884.

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IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICA.

I.

AT HOME.

Talking of America — Warned against the Interviewer— "Travellers' Tales"—Good-bye to London—International Gossip—A mythical Palace on the Thames—Reports from "A little English Friend"—The Grange—A Grafton Street Interior—Souvenirs and Portraits—An Actor on his Audiences—Hamlet at the Lyceum—Critics and Public Opinion—The final Verdict—First Nights—Anonymous Letters—Notable Gifts—The Character of Louis XI. —"A poor Mother who had lost her Son"—Scene Calls —Stories of a "Dresser"—Behind the Scenes—"Waking up"—The original Beefsteak Club Room—Host and Guests.

I.

"And I don't think he believes a word I have said," was Mr. John T. Raymond's own commentary upon a series of romances of "the wild West" which he had related to Mr. Henry Irving[1] with an intensity that was worthy of Col. Sellers himself.

[1] John Henry Brodripp Irving was born at Keinton, near

The comedian's reminiscences were graphic narratives of theatrical and frontier life, with six-shooters and bowie-knives in them, and narrow escapes enough

Glastonbury (the scene of the tradition of the sacred thorn), February 6, 1838. In 1849 his father sent him to the private school of Dr. Pinches, in George Yard, Lombard Street, London. During his school days he evinced a taste for dramatic poetry. He was placed in the office of an East India house, and might, had he liked his occupation, have become a prosperous merchant; but his ambition gravitated towards the stage. He made personal sacrifices in many ways to educate himself in the direction of his taste for dramatic work. He read plays, studied the theatre and dramatic literature, became an expert fencer, practised elocution with a famous actor, and in 1855 left London and obtained an engagement in a provincial theatre. An earnest student always, he fought his way through a world of troubles, and made his first success at the St. James's Theatre, London, October 6, 1866, as Doricourt in "The Belle's Stratagem." He afterwards played in eccentric comedy with Toole; made a hit in melodrama at the now defunct Queen's Theatre; then went to Paris with Sothern, and played Abel Murcot in "Our American Cousin." Returning to London, he filled important engagements at the Gaiety and Vaudeville Theatres. His appearance at the Lyceum Theatre, London, followed. Here, after his friend, Manager Bateman, had staked and lost everything on "Fanchette," Mr. Irving advised the production of "The Bells," which restored the fortunes of the house, and was the beginning of a series of artistic and financial successes, both for the management and the leading actor. On the death of Mr. Bateman, and the withdrawal of his widow from the lesseeship of the theatre, Mr. Irving entered upon management. One day I hope to tell the story of his life and adventures. Placidly as the river of his fortunes may seem to have flowed since he became lessee of the Lyceum, in October, 1878, the incidents of his early struggles are not more interesting than his managerial battles and victories in these latter days

to have made the fortunes of what the Americans call a ten-cent novel.

"Oh, yes, I believe it is the duty of the door-keeper at a Western theatre to collect the weapons of the audience before admitting the people to the house; that what we call the cloak-room in London, you might call the armoury out West; and that the bowie-knife of a Texan critic never weighs less than fourteen pounds. But I am not going as far as Texas, though one might do worse if one were merely crossing the Atlantic in search of adventures."

America was at this time a far-off country, about which travellers told Irving strange stories. I recall many a pleasant evening in the Beefsteak Club Room of the Lyceum Theatre, when famous citizens of the United States, actors more particularly, have sat at his round table, and smoked the Havannah of peace and pleasant memories: Booth, Barrett, Boucicault, McCullough, Raymond, Florence, and others of their craft: Generals Horace Porter, Fairchild, Merritt, Mr. Sam. Ward, Mr. Rufus Hatch, Mr. James R. Osgood, Mr. Hurlbert, Mr. Crawford, Col. Buck, Mr. Dan Dougherty, and many others. They all promised him a kindly reception and a great success.

of London. Pending a more complete biography, the sketch entitled "Henry Irving," by Austin Brereton, may be consulted with advantage; its data are well founded, and its figures are correct.

"I question, however," said an English guest, taking the other side, as Englishmen love to do, if only for the sake of argument, "if America will quite care for the naturalness of your effects, the neutral tones of some of your stage pictures, the peaceful character, if I may so style it, of your representations. They like breadth and colour and show; they are accustomed to the marvellous and the gigantic in nature; they expect on the stage some sort of interpretation of these things,—great rivers, lofty mountains, and the startling colours of their fall tints. Your gentle meads of Hampton, the poetic grace of 'Charles the First,' the simplicity of your loveliest sets, and the quiet dignity of your Shylock, will, I fear, seem tame to them."

"Human nature, I fancy," Irving responded, "is the same all the world over, and I have played to many Americans in this very theatre. You will say, perhaps, that they will accept here in London what they would not care for on the other side of the Atlantic. You would say we are an old country, with fairly settled tastes in art, a calm atmosphere, a cultivated knowledge; and that possibly what we, in our narrower ways, regard as a subtilty of art, they may not see. That may be so, though some of their humour is subtle enough, and the best of it leaves a great deal to the imagination. I know many persons, American and English, have talked to me in your strain; yet I

never saw quieter or more delicate acting than in Jefferson's Rip Van Winkle. As I said before, human nature is ever the same: it loves and hates, it quarrels and murders, it honours valour, sympathizes with the unfortunate, and delights in seeing human passions delineated on the stage. Moreover, are not the Americans, after all, our own flesh and blood? I never think of them in the sense of foreigners, as one does of the French and Germans, and the other European nations who do not speak our language; and I have yet to learn that there is any difference between us so marked that the jangle of 'The Bells' shall not stir their imagination as much as the sorrows of Charles shall move their hearts, and the story of Louis heighten their pulses. We shall see. I cannot exactly say that my soul's in arms and eager for the fray, but I have no doubt about the result. That love of breadth, of largeness, of colour, you talk of, should go hand in hand with a catholic taste, devoid of littleness and combined with a liberal criticism that is not always looking for spots on the sun."

"You are not nervous, then, as to your reception?"

"No, I am sure it will be kindly; and, for their criticism, I think it will be just. There is the same honesty of purpose and intention in American as in English criticism, and, above all, there is the great

play-going public, which is very much the same frank, generous, candid audience all over the world."

"But there is the American interviewer! You have not yet encountered that interesting individual."

"Oh, yes, I have."

"Has he been here, then?"

"Yes; not in his war-paint, nor with his six-shooter and bowie-knife, as he goes about in Raymond's Texan country, yet an interviewer still."

"And you found him not disagreeable?" asked the travelled guest.

"I found him well informed and quite a pleasant fellow."

"Ah, but he was here under your own control, probably smoking a cigar in your own room. Wait until he boards the steamer off New York. Then you will see the sort of fellow he is, with his string of questions more personal than the fire of an Old Bailey lawyer at a hostile witness under cross-examination. The Inquisition of old is not in the race with these gentlemen, except that the law, even in America, does not allow them to put you to physical torture, though they make up for that check upon their liberty by the mental pain they can inflict upon you. Apart from the interviewers proper, I have known reporters to disguise themselves as waiters, that they may pry into your secrets and report upon your most trivial actions."

"You have evidently suffered," said Irving.

"No, not I; but I have known those who have. Nothing is sacred from the prying eyes and unscrupulous pens of these men. 'You smile, old friend,' to quote your 'Louis the Eleventh,' but I am not exaggerating nor setting down aught in malice. You will see! The interviewers will turn you inside out."

"You don't say so! Well, that will be a new sensation, at all events," answered Irving; and, when our friend had left, he remarked, "I wonder if Americans, when they visit this country, go home and exaggerate our peculiarities as much as some of our own countrymen, after a first trip across the Atlantic, evidently exaggerate theirs?"

"There are many travellers who, in relating their experiences, think it necessary to accentuate them with exaggerated colour; and then we have to make allowances for each man's individuality."

"How much certain of our critical friends make of that same 'individuality,' by the way, when they choose to call it 'mannerism!' The interviewers, I suppose, will have a good deal to say on that subject."

"English papers and American correspondents have given them plenty of points for personal criticism."

"That is true. They will be clever if they can find anything new to say in that direction. Well, I don't

think it is courage, and I know it is not vanity; yet I feel quite happy about this American tour."

A week or two later and Irving spoke the sentiments of his heart upon this subject, at the farewell banquet given to him by artistic, literary, legal, social, and journalistic London, under the presidency of Lord Chief Justice Coleridge; and it will be fitting, I trust, to close these preliminary paragraphs with his characteristic and touching good-bye:—

"My Lord Chief Justice, my lords and gentlemen,—I cannot conceive a greater honour entering into the life of any man than the honour you have paid me by assembling here to-night. To look around this room and scan the faces of my distinguished hosts would stir to its depths a colder nature than mine. It is not in my power, my lords and gentlemen, to thank you for the compliment you have to-night paid me.

> 'The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
> Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel.'

"Never before have I so strongly felt the magic of those words; but you will remember it is also said, in the same sentence, 'Give thy thoughts no tongue.' (Laughter.) And gladly, had it been possible, would I have obeyed that wise injunction to-night. (Renewed laughter.) The actor is profoundly influenced by precedent, and I cannot forget that many of my predecessors have been nerved by

farewell banquets for the honour which awaited them on the other side of the Atlantic; but this occasion I regard as much more than a compliment to myself,—I regard it as a tribute to the art which I am proud to serve—(cheers)—and I believe that feeling will be shared by the profession to which you have assembled to do honour. (Cheers.) The time has long gone by when there was any need to apologize for the actor's calling. (Hear, hear.) The world can no more exist without the drama than it can without its sister art—music. The stage gives the readiest response to the demand of human nature to be transported out of itself into the realms of the ideal—not that all our ideas on the stage are realized; none but the artist knows how immeasurably he may fall short of his aim or his conception; but to have an ideal in art, and to strive through one's life to embody it, may be a passion to the actor as it may be to the poet. (Cheers.) Your lordship has spoken most eloquently of my career. Possessed of a generous mind and a highly judicial faculty, your lordship has been to-night, I fear, more generous than judicial. But if I have in any way deserved commendation, I am proud that it is as an actor that I have won it. (Cheers.) As the director of a theatre my experience has been short, but as an actor I have been before the London public for seventeen years; and on one thing I am

sure you will all agree,—that no actor or manager has ever received from that public more generous and ungrudging encouragement and support. (Cheers.) Concerning our visit to America, I need hardly say that I am looking forward to it with no common pleasure. It has often been an ambition with English actors to gain the goodwill of the English-speaking race,—a goodwill which is right heartily reciprocated towards our American fellow-workers, when they gratify us by sojourning here. (Cheers.) Your God-speed would alone assure me a hearty welcome in any land; but I am not going amongst strangers—I am going amongst friends—(cheers)—and when I, for the first time, touch American ground, I shall receive many a grip of the hand from men whose friendship I am proud to possess. (Cheers.) Concerning our expedition the American people will no doubt exercise an independent judgment—a prejudice of theirs and a habit of long standing—(laughter)—as your lordship has reminded us, by the fact that to-day is the fourth of July—an anniversary rapidly becoming an English institution. Your lordship is doubtless aware, as to-night has so happily proved, that the stage has reckoned amongst its stanchest supporters many great and distinguished lawyers. There are many lawyers, I am told, in America—(laughter)—and as I am sure that they all deserve to be judges, I am in hopes that

they will materially help me to gain a favourable verdict from the American people. (Cheers and laughter.) I have given but poor expression to my sense of the honour you have conferred upon me, and upon the comrades associated with me in this our enterprise—an enterprise which I hope will favourably show the method and discipline of a company of English actors; on their behalf I thank you, and I also thank you on behalf of the lady who has so adorned the Lyceum stage—(cheers)—and to whose rare gifts your lordship has paid so just and gracious a tribute. (Cheers.) The climax of the favour extended to me by my countrymen has been reached to-night. You have set upon me a burden of responsibility—a burden which I gladly and proudly bear. The memory of to-night will be to me a sacred thing—a memory which will throughout my life be ever treasured—a memory which will stimulate me to further endeavour, and encourage me to loftier aim." (Loud and continued cheers.)

II.

No man was ever more written of or talked about in America than Henry Irving; probably no man was ever more misrepresented as to his art and his life. A monster, according to his enemies; an angel, if you took the verdict of his friends; he was a mystery to

untravelled American journalists, and an enigma to the great play-going public of the American cities. They were told that people either loved or hated him at first sight. American tourists even carried home contradictory reports of him, though the majority were enthusiastic in praise of him as an actor and as a man. The American newspaper correspondent is naturally a trifle more sensational in the style of his work than his English colleague, because his editor favours graphic writing, entertaining chronicles, picturesque descriptions. Then the sub-editor or compiler of news from the foreign exchanges looks out for "English personals," gossip about the Queen, notes on the Prince of Wales, out-of-the-way criticisms of actors and public persons of all classes; and so every *outré* thing that has been published about Irving in England has found its way into the ubiquitous press of America. Added to this publicity, private correspondence has also dealt largely with him, his work, his manners, his habits; for every American who travels writes letters home to his family and often to his local paper, and many English people who have visited America keep up a pleasant epistolary communication with their good friends in the New World.

III.

Being in New York ahead of Mr. Irving's arrival, I

found much of the curious fiction of which gossip had made him the hero, crystallized into definite assertions that were accepted as undisputed facts. A day's sail from the Empire city, in a pretty Eastern villa, I discovered the London gossip-monger's influence rampant. But if a prominent critic in London could publicly credit Mr. Irving's success as an actor to his hospitable dispensation of "chicken and champagne," one need not be surprised that social gossips should draw as liberally on their imagination for illustrations of his social popularity. A leading figure in the world of art, and a person of distinction in Vanity Fair, it is not to be wondered at that Jealousy and Mrs. Grundy, standing outside his orbit, should invent many startling stories about him. I have not exaggerated the following conversation, and I am glad to use it here, not only as illustrative of the singular misrepresentations of Irving's life and habits, but to bind up in this volume a sketch of the actor and the man which has the merit of being eminently true, and at the same time not inappropriate to these pages.

"Lives in chambers!" exclaimed an American lady, during an after-dinner conversation in a pleasant Eastern home. "I thought he owned a lovely palace."

"Indeed; where, madam?" I asked, "in Utopia?"

"No, sir; on the banks of your Thames river. A

little English friend of mine told me so, and described the furnishing of it. I understand that it is as splendid as Claude Melnotte's by the Lake of Como."

"And as real?"

"I don't know what you mean; but, if what she says is true, it is wickeder, any way. You do not say that it is all false about his banquets to the aristocracy, his royal receptions? What about the Prince of Wales, then, and Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone and the Poet Laureate visiting him? And his garden parties and the illuminations at night, parterres of flowers mixed up with coloured lamps, his collections of rhododendrons and his military bands?"

"Were you ever at a botanical *fête* in Regent's Park?" I asked.

"I have never crossed the Atlantic."

"Your little English friend evidently knows the Botanical well."

"She is acquainted with everything and everybody in London. I wish she were here now. Perhaps she knows a little more than some of Mr. Irving's friends care to admit."

"Does she know Mr. Irving?"

"She knows his house."

"By the Lake of Como?"

"No, sir; by the Thames."

"One comes from home to hear news. Will you not tell us all about it, then?"

"No, I will not. I think you are positively rude; but that is like you English. There, I beg your pardon; you made me say it. But, seriously now, is not Mr. Irving as rich as—"

"Claude Melnotte?"

"No; Crœsus, or Vanderbilt, or Mackay? And does he not live in that palace, and have crowds of servants, and visit with the court and the aristocracy? Why, I read in the papers myself, quite lately, of an estate he had bought near, let me see—is there such a place as Hammersmith?"

"Yes."

"Is that on the Thames?"

"Yes, more or less."

"Well, then, is that true? More or less, I suppose. You are thinking how inquisitive I am. But you started the subject."

"Did I?"

"You said he lives in chambers."

"I answered your own question."

"Ah!" she said, laughing merrily, "now I know my little English friend spoke the truth, because I remember she said there was a mystery about Mr. Irving's lovely house; that he only receives a certain princely and lordly set there. How could she have

described it if she had not seen it? A baronial castle, a park, lovely gardens, great dogs lying about on the lawns, wainscoted chambers, a library full of scarce books and costly *bric-à-brac*, Oriental rugs, baths, stained-glass windows, suits of armour, and a powerful bell in a turret to call the servants in to meals."

"Beautiful! But if there is a mystery about it, what of those gorgeous receptions?"

"Oh, don't ask me questions. It is I who am seeking for information. There is no public person in the world just at this moment in whom I take a deeper interest. If he were not coming to America, I should have been obliged to go to London, if only to see what you call a first night at the Lyceum. We read all about these things. We are kept well informed by our newspaper correspondents—"

"And your little English friend."

"Yes, she writes to me quite often."

"Well, now I will tell you the truth about that palace on the Thames," I said.

"Ah! he confesses," exclaimed the bright little lady, whose friends suspect her of writing more than one of the famous American novels.

An interested and interesting group of ladies and gentlemen brought their chairs closer to the conversational centre of the company.

"A few years ago, Irving and a friend, strolling

through the purlieus of Brook Green (a decayed village that has been swallowed up by the progress of West End London) towards Hammersmith, saw a house to be sold. It was low and dilapidated, but it had an old-fashioned garden, and the lease was offered at a small sum. Irving knew the house, and he had a mind to examine its half-ruined rooms. He did so, and concluded his investigation by buying the lease. It cost him about half the money you would pay for an ordinary house off Fifth Avenue in New York; less than you would pay for a house in Remsen Street, Brooklyn; in Michigan Avenue, Chicago; or in Commonwealth Avenue, Boston. Since then it has been one of his few sources of amusement to lay out its garden, to restore the old house and make it habitable. It is a typical English home, with low red roofs, ancient trees, oaken stairs, and a garden with old-fashioned flowers and fruit in it; but it is the home of a yeoman rather than a prince, the home of a Cincinnatus rather than the palace of an Alcibiades. The staff of servants consist of a gardener and his wife, and I have been present at several of the owner's receptions. The invitation was given in this wise: 'I am going to drive to the Grange on Sunday afternoon,—will you bring your wife, and have a cup of tea?' And that described the feast; but Irving, looking at his gilliflowers and tulips, watching the gambols of his dogs, and discussing

between whiles the relative cost of carpets and India matting, illustrated the truth of the philosophy, that there is real recreation and rest in a mere change of occupation. Those persons who tell you that Irving's tastes are not simple, his private life an honour to him, and his success the result of earnestness of purpose, clearness of aim, deep study and hard work, neither know him nor understand how great a battle men fight in England, who cut their way upwards from the ranks, to stand with the highest at head-quarters."

Quite a round of applause greeted this plain story.

"Why, my dear sir," exclaimed my original interlocutor, "I am right glad to hear the truth. Well, well, and that is Mr. Irving's real home, is it? But I thought you said he lives in chambers."

"One day he hopes to furnish and enjoy the simplicity and quiet of that cottage in a garden, four miles from his theatre; but he still lives, where he has lived for a dozen years or more, in very unpretentious rooms in the heart of London."

And now, courteous reader, come straightway into this little company of the friendly and the curious, and I will show you where Henry Irving lived until he set sail for America, a week ago, and you shall hear him talk about his art and his work; for my good friend, the editor of *Harper's Magazine*, commissioned me to

describe the famous English actor at home, and here is the result :—

IV.

At the corner of Grafton Street, where the traffic of a famous West End artery ebbs and flows among picture exhibitions and jewellery stores, lives the most popular actor of his time. It is a mysterious-looking house. The basement is occupied by a trunk store. From the first floor to the top are Mr. Henry Irving's chambers. They present from the outside a series of dingy, half-blind windows that suggest no prospect of warmth or cheer. "Fitting abode of the spirit of tragic gloom!" you might well exclaim, standing on the threshold. You shall enter with me, if you will, to correct your first impressions, and bear testimony to the fact that appearances are often deceptive.

This sombre door, the first on the left as we enter Grafton Street from Bond Street, leads to his chambers. Two flights of stairs—not bright, as a Paris staircase, not with the sunlight upon the carpet, as in New York, but darkened with the shadows of a London atmosphere—and we enter his general room. With the hum of the West End buzzing at the windows, the coloured glass of which shuts out what little sunlight falls there, the apartment is characteristic of a great artist and a great city. The mantelpiece recalls the ancient fashion of

old English mansions. It is practically an oak cabinet, with a silver shield as the centre-piece. On the opposite side of the room is a well-stocked book-case, surmounted by a raven that carries one's thoughts to Poe and his sombre story. On tables here and there are materials for letter-writing, and evidence of much correspondence, though one of the actor's social sins is said to be the tardiness with which he answers letters. The truth is, the many pressing claims on his time do not enable him to act always upon the late Duke of Wellington's well-known principle of immediately replying to every letter that is addressed to him. A greater philosopher than his Grace said many letters answer themselves if you let them alone, and I should not wonder if Irving finds much truth in the axiom. *Bric-à-brac*, historic relics, theatrical properties, articles of *virtù*, lie about in admired disorder. Here is Edmund Kean's sword, the one which was presented to Irving on the first night of his Richard III. by that excellent and much-respected artist Mr. Chippendale, who had acted with Edmund Kean, and was his personal friend. In a glass case near this precious treasure is a ring that belonged to David Garrick. It is an exquisite setting of a miniature of Shakespeare. This was given to Irving by the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. In a cabinet near one of the windows, the order of the George which Edmund Kean

wore in "Richard III.," and his prompt-book of "Othello." Close by are three marble busts,—one of Young, with a faded wreath upon its brow; another of Mrs. Harriet Brown, "a most dear and valued friend" (to use his own words); and the third, of Ellen Terry, sculptured by Irving's friend, Brodie,—a portrait of Rossi (presented by the actor) as Nero; a photograph of Charles Dickens (presented by Miss Mary Dickens),—the one by Gurney, of New York, which the great author himself thought an excellent portrait; medallions of Émile Devrient and John Herschell (the latter a gift from Herschell's daughter); and a sketch of a favourite Scotch terrier (very well known to his friends as "Charlie"), which during the last year or two has become his most constant companion at home and at the theatre. The adjoining room continues the collection of the actor's art treasures,—not the mere connoisseur's museum of articles of *virtù*, but things which have a personal value and a special history associated with the art their owner loves.

It is a frank smile that greets us as the actor enters and extends his long, thin hand. I know no one whose hand is so suggestive of nervous energy and artistic capacity as Irving's. It is in perfect harmony with the long, expressive face, the notably æsthetic figure!

"You want to talk shop," he says, striding about

the room, with his hands in the pockets of his loose gray coat. "Well, with all my heart, if you think it useful and interesting."

"I do."

"May I select the subject?"

"Yes."

"Then I would like to go back to one we touched upon at your own suggestion some months ago."

"An actor on his audiences?"

"Yes. The subject is a good one; it interests me, and in that brief anonymous newspaper sketch of a year ago you did little more than indicate the points we discussed. Let us see if we cannot revive and complete it."

"Agreed. I will 'interview' you, then, as they say in America."

"By all means," replied my host, handing me a cigar, and settling himself down in an easy-chair by the fire. "I am ready."

"Well, then, as I think I have said before when on this subject, there has always appeared to me something phenomenal in the mutual understanding that exists between you and your audiences; it argues an active sympathy and confidence on both sides."

"That is exactly what I think exists. In presence of my audience I feel as safe and contented as when sitting down with an old friend."

"I have seen Lord Beaconsfield, when he was Mr. Disraeli, rise in the House of Commons, and begin a speech in a vein and manner evidently considered beforehand, which, proving at the moment out of harmony with the feelings of the House, he has entirely altered from his original idea to suit the immediate mood and temper of his audience. Now, sympathetic as you are with *your* audience, have you, under their influence in the development of a new character, ever altered your first idea during the course of the representation?"

"You open up an interesting train of thought," he answered. "Except once, I have never altered my original idea under the circumstances you suggest; that was in 'Vanderdecken,' and I changed the last scene. I can always tell when the audience is with me. It was not with me in 'Vanderdecken;' neither was it entirely on the first night of 'Hamlet,' which is, perhaps, curious, considering my subsequent success. On the first night I felt that the audience did not go with me until the first meeting with Ophelia, when they changed toward me entirely. But as night succeeded night, my Hamlet grew in their estimation I could feel it all the time, and now I *know* that they like it—that they are with me heart and soul. I will tell you a curious thing about my 'Hamlet' audience. It is the most interesting audience I play to. For any

other piece there is a difficulty in getting the people seated by half-past eight. For 'Hamlet' the house is full and quiet, and waiting for the curtain to go up, by half-past seven. On the first night the curtain dropped at a quarter to one."

"In what part do you feel most at home with your audience, and most certain of them?"

"Well, in Hamlet," he replied, thoughtfully.

"Has that been your greatest pecuniary success?"

"Yes."

"What were two unprecedented runs of 'Hamlet?'"

"The first was two hundred nights; the second, one hundred and seven; and in the country I have often played it ten times out of a twelve nights' engagement. But, as we have got into this line of thought about audiences, it should be remembered that, with the exception of two or three performances, I had never played Hamlet before that first night at the Lyceum. Indeed, so far as regards what is called the classic and legitimate drama, my successes, such as they were, had been made outside it, really in eccentric comedy. As a rule, actors who have appeared for the first time in London in such parts as Richard III., Macbeth, Hamlet, and Othello, have played them previously for years in the country; and here comes a point about my audiences. They knew this, and I am sure they estimated the performance accordingly, giving me

their special sympathy and good wishes. I believe in the justice of audiences. They are sincere and hearty in their approval of what they like, and have the greatest hand in making an actor's reputation. Journalistic power cannot be over-valued; it is enormous; but, in regard to actors, it is a remarkable fact that their permanent reputations, the final and lasting verdict of their merits, are made chiefly by their audiences. Sometimes the true record comes after the players are dead, and it is sometimes written by men who possibly never saw them. Edmund Kean's may be called a posthumous reputation. If you read the newspapers of the time, you will find that during his acting days he was terribly mauled. Garrick's impersonations were not much written about in his day. As to Burbage, Betterton, and other famous actors of their time, whose names are familiar to us, when they lived there were practically no newspapers to chronicle their work."

"You believe, then, that merit eventually makes its mark in spite of professional criticism, and that, like Masonic rituals, the story of success, its form and pressure, may go down orally to posterity?"

"I believe that what audiences really like they stand by. I believe they hand down the actor's name to future generations. They are the judge and jury who find the verdict and pronounce sentence. I will

give you an example in keeping with the rapid age in which we live. I am quite certain that within twelve hours of the production of a new play of any importance all London knows whether the piece is a success or a failure, no matter whether the journals have criticized it or not. Each person in the audience is the centre of a little community, and the word is passed on from one to the other."

"What is your feeling in regard to first-night audiences, apart from the regular play-going public? I should imagine that the sensitive nature of a true artist must be considerably jarred by the knowledge that a first-night audience is peculiarly fastidious and sophisticated."

"I confess I am happier in presence of what you call the regular play-going public. I am apt to become depressed on a first night. Some of my friends and fellow-artists are stimulated and excited by a sense of opposition. I fear it lowers me. I know that while there is a good, hearty crowd who have come to be pleased, there are some who have *not* come to be pleased. God help us if we were in the hands of the few who, from personal or other motives, come to the theatre in the hope of seeing a failure, and who pour out their malice and spite in anonymous letters!"

"Detraction and malicious opposition are among

the penalties of success. To be on a higher platform than your fellows is to be a mark for envy and slander," I answered, dropping, I fear, into platitude, which my host cut short with a shrug of the shoulders and a rapid stride across the room.

He handed to me a book, handsomely bound and with broad margins, through which ran a ripple of old-faced type, evidently the work of an author and a handicraftsman who love the memories both of Caxton and his immediate successors. It was entitled "Notes on Louis XI.; with some short extracts from Commines' Memoirs," and was dated "London, 1878—printed for the author."

"That book," said my host, "was sent to me by a person I had then never seen or heard of. It came to me anonymously. I wished to have a second copy of it, and sent to the printer with the purpose of obtaining it. He replied by telling me the work was not for sale, and referring me to the author, whose address he sent to me. I made the application as requested; another copy was forwarded, and with it a kind intimation that if ever I should be near the house of the writer, 'we should be glad to see you.' I called in due course, and found the author one of a most agreeable family. 'You will wonder,' they said at parting, 'why we wrote and compiled this book. It was simply for this reason: a public critic in a leading

journal had said, as nothing was really known of the character, manners, and habits of Louis XI., an actor might take whatever liberties he pleased with the subject. We prepared this little volume to put on record a refutation of the statement, a protest against it, and a tribute to your impersonation of the character.' Here is another present that I received soon afterwards,—one of the most beautiful works of its kind I ever remember to have seen."

It was an artistic casket, in which was enshrined what looked like a missal bound in carved ivory and gold. It proved, however, to be a beautifully bound book of poetic and other memorials of Charles the First, printed and illustrated by hand, with exquisite head and tail pieces in water-colours, portraits, coats-of-arms, and vignettes, by Buckman, Castaing, Terrel, Slie, and Phillips. The work was "imprinted for the author at London, 30th January, 1879," and the title ran: "To the Honour of Henry Irving: to cherish the Memory of Charles the First: these Thoughts, Gold of the Dead, are here devoted." As a work of art, the book is a treasure. The portraits of the Charleses and several of their generals are in the highest style of water-colour painting, with gold borders; and the initial letters and other embellishments are studies of the most finished and delicate character.

"Now these," said their owner, returning the volumes to the book-shelves over which the raven stretched its wings, "are only two out of scores of proofs that audiences are intellectually active, and that they find many ways of fixing their opinions. These incidents of personal action are evidences of the spirit of the whole. One night, in 'Hamlet,' something was thrown upon the stage. It struck a lamp, and fell into the orchestra. It could not be found for some time. An inquiry was made about it by some person in the front,—an aged woman, who was much concerned that I had not received it,—so I was informed at the box-office. A sad-looking woman, evidently very poor, called the next day; and, being informed that the trinket was found, expressed herself greatly pleased. 'I often come to the gallery of the theatre,' she said, 'and I wanted Mr. Irving to have this family heirloom. I wanted him alone in this world to possess it.' This is the trinket, which I wear on my watch-chain. The theatre was evidently a solace to that poor soul. She had probably some sorrow in her life; and she may have felt a kind of comfort in Hamlet, or myself, perhaps, possessing this little cross."

As he spoke, the actor's lithe fingers were busy at his watch-chain, and he seemed to be questioning the secret romance of the trinket thrown to him from the gallery.

"I don't know why else she let it fall upon the

stage; but strange impulses sometimes take hold of people sitting at a play, especially in tragedy."

The trinket about which he speculated so much is an old-fashioned gold cross. On two sides is engraved, "Faith, Hope, and Charity;" on the front, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins;" and on the reverse, "I scorn to fear or change."

"They said at the box-office," went on the actor, musingly, "that she was a poor mother who had lost her son;" and then rousing himself, he returned brightly to the subject of our conversation. "One example," he said, "of the generous sympathy of audiences serves to point the moral of what I mean; and in every case the motive is the same, to show an earnest appreciation, and to encourage and give pleasure to the actor. At Sheffield one night, during the grouse season, a man in the gallery threw a brace of birds upon the stage, with a rough note of thanks and compliments; and one of the pit audience sent me round a knife which he had made himself. You see, the people who do these things have nothing to gain; they are under no extraneous influence; they judge for themselves; and they are representative of that great Public Opinion which makes or mars, and which in the end is always right. When they are against you, it is hard at the time to be convinced that you are wrong; *but you are.* Take my case. I made my first suc-

cess at the St. James's. We were to have opened with 'Hunted Down.' We did not. I was cast for Doricourt in 'The Belle's Stratagem'—a part which I had never played before, and which I thought did not suit me. I felt that this was the opinion of the audience soon after the play began. The house appeared to be indifferent, and I believed that failure was conclusively stamped upon my work, when suddenly, on my exit after the mad scene, I was startled by a burst of applause, and so great was the enthusiasm of the audience that I was compelled to reappear on the scene,—a somewhat unusual thing, as you know, except on the operatic stage."

"And in America," I said, "where scene-calls are quite usual, and quite destructive of the illusion of the play, I think."

"You are right; and, by the way, if there must be calls, I like our modern method of taking a call after an act on the scene itself. But to proceed. I next played 'Hunted Down,' and they liked me in that; and when they do like, audiences are no niggards of their confessions of pleasure. My next engagement was at the Queen's Theatre, where I was successful. Then I went to the Gaiety, where I played Chevenex. I followed at Drury Lane in 'Formosa,' and nobody noticed me at all."

"Do you think you always understand the silence of

an audience? I mean in this way: on a first night, for example, I have sometimes gone round to speak to an actor, and have been met with the remark, 'How cold the audience is!' as if excessive quietness were indicative of displeasure, the idea being that when an audience is really pleased, it always stamps its feet and claps its hands. I have seen an artist making his or her greatest success with an audience that manifested its delight by suppressing every attempt at applause."

"I know exactly what you mean," he answered. "I recall a case in point. There was such an absence of applause on the first night of 'The Two Roses,' while I was on the stage, that I could not believe my friends when they congratulated me on my success. But with experience one gets to understand the idiosyncrasies and habits of audiences. You spoke of the silence of some audiences. The most wonderful quiet and silence I have ever experienced as an actor, a stillness that is profound, has been in those two great theatres, the one that was burned down at Glasgow, and the Standard, in London, during the court scene of 'The Bells.'"

V.

Genius is rarely without a sense of humour. Mr. Irving has a broad appreciation of fun, though his own humour is subtle and deep down. This is never

better shown than in his Richard and Louis. It now and then appears in his conversations; and when he has an anecdote to tell, he seems to develop the finer and more delicate motives of the action of the narrative, as if he were dramatizing it as he went along.

We dropped our main subject of audiences presently to talk of other things. He related to me a couple of stories of a "dresser" who was his servant in days gone by. The poor man is dead now, and these incidents of his life will not hurt his memory.

"One night," said Irving, "when I had been playing a new part, the old man said, while dressing me, 'This is your master-piece, sir!' How do you think he had arrived at this opinion? He had seen nothing of the piece, but he noticed that I perspired more than usual. The poor fellow was given over to drink at last; so I told him we must part if he did not mend his ways. 'I wonder,' I said to him, 'that, for the sake of your wife and children, you do not reform; besides, you look so ridiculous.' Indeed, I never saw a sillier man when he was tipsy; and his very name would set children laughing—it was Doody. Well, in response to my appeal, with maudlin vanity and with tears in his eyes, he answered, 'They make so much of me!' It reminded me of Dean Ramsay's story of his

drunken parishioner. The parson, you remember, admonished the whisky-drinking Scot, concluding his lecture by offering his own conduct as an example. 'I can go into the village and come home again without getting drunk.' 'Ah, minister, but I'm sae popular!' was the fuddling parishioner's apologetic reply."

A notable person in appearance, I said just now. Let me sketch the famous actor as we leave his rooms together. A tall, spare figure in a dark overcoat and grayish trousers, black neckerchief carelessly tied, a tall hat, rather broad at the brim. His hair is black and bushy, with a wave in it on the verge of a curl, and suggestions of gray at the temples and over the ears. It is a pale, somewhat ascetic face, with bushy eyebrows, dark dreamy eyes, a nose that indicates gentleness rather than strength, a thin upper lip, a mouth opposed to all ideas of sensuousness, but nervous and sensitive, a strong jaw and chin, and a head inclined to droop a little, as is often the case with men of a studious habit. There is great individuality in the whole figure, and in the face a rare mobility which photography fails to catch in all the efforts I have yet seen of English artists. Though the popular idea is rather to associate tragedy with the face and manner of Irving, there is nothing sunnier than his smile. It

lights up all his countenance, and reveals his soul in his eyes; but it is like the sunshine that bursts for a moment from a cloud, and disappears to leave the landscape again in shadows, flecked here and there with fleeting reminiscences of the sun.

The management of the Lyceum Theatre has a moral and classic atmosphere of its own. A change came over the house with the success of "The Bells." "Charles I." consummated it. You enter the theatre with feelings entirely different from those which take possession of you at any other house. It is as if the management inspired you with a special sense of its responsibility to Art, and your own obligations to support its earnest endeavours. Mr. Irving has intensified all this by a careful personal attention to every detail belonging to the conduct of his theatre. He has stamped his own individuality upon it. His influence is seen and felt on all hands. He has given the colour of his ambition to his officers and servants. His object is to perfect the art of dramatic representation, and elevate the profession to which he belongs. There is no commercial consideration at work when he is mounting a play, though his experience is that neither expense nor pains are lost on the public.

VI.

When Mr. Irving's art is discussed, when his Hamlet or his Mathias, his Shylock or his Dei Franchi, are discussed, he should be regarded from a broader stand-point than that of the mere actor. He is entitled to be looked at as not only the central figure of the play, but as the motive power of the whole entertainment—the master who has set the story and grouped it, the controlling genius of the moving picture, the source of the inspiration of the painter, the musician, the costumer, and the machinist, whose combined efforts go to the realization of the actor-manager's conception and plans. It is acknowledged on all hands that Mr. Irving has done more for dramatic art all round than any actor of our time, and it is open to serious question whether any artist of any time has done as much. Not alone on the stage, but in front of it, at the very entrance of his theatre, the dignified influence of his management is felt. Every department has for its head a man of experience and tact, and every person about the place, from the humblest messenger to the highest officer and actor, seems to carry about with him a certain pride of association with the management.

Mr. Irving's dressing-room at the theatre is a thorough business-like apartment, with at the same time evidences of the taste which obtains at his chambers. It is as unpretentious, and yet, in its way, as remarkable as the man. See him sitting there at the dressing-table, where he is model to himself, where he converts himself into the character he is sustaining. His own face is his canvas, his own person, for the time being, the lay figure which he adorns. It is a large square table in the corner of the room. In the centre is a small, old-fashioned mirror, which is practically the easel upon which he works; for therein is reflected the face which has to depict the passion and fear of Mathias, the cupidity of Richard, the martyrdom of Charles, the grim viciousness of Dubosc, the implacable justice of the avenging Dei Franchi, and the touching melancholy of Hamlet.

As a mere matter of "make-up," his realizations of the historical pictures of Charles the First and Philip of Spain are the highest kind of art. They belong to Vandyck and Velasquez, not only in their imitation of the great masters, but in the sort of inspiration for character and colour which moved those famous painters. See him sitting, I say, the actor-artist at his easel. A tray on the right-hand side

of his mirror may be called his palette; it contains an assortment of colours, paint-pots, powders, and brushes; but in his hand, instead of the maul-stick, is the familiar hare's-foot—the actor's "best friend" from the earliest days of rouge and burnt cork. To the left of the mirror lie letters opened and unopened, missives just brought by the post, a jewel-box, and various "properties" in the way of chains, lockets, or buckles that belong to the part he is playing He is talking to his stage-manager, or to some intimate friend, as he continues his work. You can hear the action of the drama that is going on—a distant cheer, the clash of swords, a merry laugh, or a passing chorus.

The "call-boy" of the theatre looks in at intervals to report the progress of the piece up to the point where it is necessary the leading artist should appear upon the stage. Then, as if he is simply going to see a friend who is waiting for him, Irving leaves his dressing-room, and you are alone. There is no "pulling himself together," or "bracing up," or putting on "tragic airs" as he goes. It is a pleasant "Good-night," or "I shall see you again," that takes him out of his dressing-room, and you can tell when he is before the audience by the loud cheers that come rushing up the staircases from the stage. While he

is away, you look around the room. You find that the few pictures which decorate the walls are theatrical portraits. Here is an etching of Garrick's head; there a water-colour of Ellen Terry; here a study of Macready in Virginius; there a study in oil of Edmund Kean, by Clint, side by side with a portrait of George Frederic Cooke, by Liversiege. Interspersed among these things are framed play-bills of a past age and interesting autograph letters. Near the dressing-table is a tall looking-glass, in front of it an easy-chair, over which are lying a collection of new draperies and costumes recently submitted for the actor-manager's approval. The room is warm with the gas that illuminates it, the atmosphere delightful to the fancy that finds a special fascination behind the foot-lights.

VII.

A REFLECTIVE writer, with the power to vividly recall a past age and contrast it with the present, might find ample inspiration in the rooms to which Mr. Irving presently invites us. It is Saturday night. On this last day in every acting week it is his habit to sup at the theatre, and in spite of his two performances he finds strength enough to entertain a few guests, sometimes a snug party of three, sometimes a

lively company of eight or ten. We descend a carpeted staircase, cross the stage upon the remains of the snow scene of the "Corsican Brothers," ascend a winding stair, pass through an armoury packed with such a variety of weapons as to suggest the Tower of London, and are then ushered into a spacious wainscoted apartment, with a full set of polished ancient armour in each corner of it, an antique fireplace with the example of an old master over the mantle, a high-backed settee in an alcove opposite the blind windows (the sills of which are decorated with ancient bottles and jugs), and in the centre of the room an old oak dining-table, furnished for supper with white cloth, cut glass, and silver, among which shine the familiar beet-root and tomato.

"This was the old Beefsteak Club Room," says our host; "beyond there is the kitchen; the members dined here. The apartments were lumber-rooms until lately."

Classic lumber-rooms truly! In the history of the clubs no association is more famous than the Sublime Society of Beefsteaks. The late William Jerdan was the first to attempt anything like a concise sketch of the club, and he wrote his reminiscences thereof for me and *The Gentleman's Magazine* a dozen years ago, in the popular modern days of that periodical. Jerdan

gave me an account of the club in the days when he visited it.

"The President," he said,—"an absolute despot during his reign,—sat at the head of the table, adorned with ribbon and badge, and with the insignia of a silver gridiron on his breast; his head, when he was oracular, was crowned with a feathery hat, said to have been worn by Garrick in some gay part on the stage. He looked every inch a king. At the table on this occasion were seated the Bishop, Samuel Arnold, the patriotic originator of English opera and strenuous encourager of native musical talent. He wore a mitre, said to have belonged to Cardinal Gregorio; but, be that as it might, it became him well, as he set it on his head to pronounce the grace before meat, which he intoned as reverently as if he had been in presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury instead of a bevy of Steakers. Near him was John Richards, the Recorder, whose office in passing sentence on culprits was discharged with piquancy and effect. Captain Morris, the Laureate, occupied a distinguished seat; so also did Dick Wilson, the Secretary, a bit of a butt to the jokers, who were wont to extort from him some account of a Continental trip, where he prided himself on having ordered a 'boulevard' for his dinner, and *un paysan* (for *faisan*) to be roasted; and last of all

I can recall to mind, at the bottom of the plenteous board sat the all-important 'Boots,' the youngest member of the august assembly. These associated as a sort of staff with a score of other gentlemen, all men of the world, men of intellect and intelligence, well educated, and of celebrity in various lines of life—noblemen, lawyers, physicians and surgeons, authors, artists, newspaper editors, actors,—it is hardly possible to conceive any combination of various talent to be more efficient for the object sought than the Beefsteaks.

"The accommodation for their meetings was built, expressly for that end, behind the scenes of the Lyceum Theatre, by Mr. Arnold; and, among other features, was a room with no daylight to intrude, and this was the dining-room, with the old gridiron on the ceiling, over the centre of the table. The cookery on which the good cheer of the company depended was carried on in what may be called the kitchen, in full view of the chairman, and served through the opposite wall, namely, a huge gridiron with bars as wide apart as the 'chess' of small windows, handed hot and hot to the expectant hungerers. There were choice salads (mostly of beet-root), porter, and port.

"The plates were never overloaded, but small cuts

sufficed till almost satiated appetite perhaps called for one more from the third cut in the rump itself, which his Grace of Norfolk, after many slices, prized as the grand essence of bullock ! "

Other times, other manners. The rooms are still there. The gridiron is gone from the ceiling, but the one through which sliced bullock used to be handed "hot and hot" to the nobility of blood and intellect remains. It and the kitchen (now furnished with a fine modern cooking-range) are shut off from the dining-room, and neither porter nor port ever weighs down the spirits of Mr. Irving's guests. He sometimes regales a few friends here after the play. The *menu* on these occasions would contrast as strangely with that of the old days as the guests and the subjects of their conversation and mirth. It is classic ground on which we tread, and the ghosts that rise before us are those of Sheridan, Perry, Lord Erskine, Cam Hobhouse, and their boon companions. Should the notabilities among Irving's friends be mentioned, the list would be a fair challenge to the old Beefsteaks. I do not propose to deal with these giants of yesterday and to-day, but to contrast with Jerdan's picture a recent supper of guests gathered together on an invitation of only a few hours previously. On the left side of Irving sat one of his most intimate friends, a famous

London comedian; on the right, a well-known American tragedian, who had not yet played in London; opposite, at the other side of the circular-ended table, sat a theatrical manager from Dublin, and another of the same profession from the English midlands; the other chairs were occupied by a famous traveller, an American gentleman connected with literature and life insurance, a young gentleman belonging to English political and fashionable society, the editor of a Liverpool journal, a provincial playwright, and a north-country philanthropist.

The repast began with oysters, and ran through a few *entrées* and a steak, finishing with a rare old Stilton cheese. There were various salads, very dry sherry and champagne, a rich Burgundy, and, after all, sodas and brandies and cigars. The talk was "shop" from first to last—discussions of the artistic treatment of certain characters by actors of the day and of a previous age, anecdotes of the stage, the position of the drama, its purpose and mission. Every guest contributed his quota to the general talk, the host himself giving way to the humour of the hour, and chatting of his career, his position, his hopes, his prospects, his ambition, in the frankest way. Neither the space at my disposal nor the custom of the place will permit of a revelation of this social dialogue; for the founder of

the feast has revived, with the restored Beefsteak rooms, the motto from Horace's "Epistles" (paraphrased by the old club Bishop), which is still inscribed on the dining-room wall :—

> Let no one bear beyond this threshold hence
> Words utter'd here in friendly confidence.

II.

NEW YORK.

Going to meet the *Britannic*—The *Blackbird*—Skirmishers of the American Press—The London *Standard's* Message to New York, Boston, and Chicago—"Working" America—"Reportorial" Experiences—Daylight off Staten Island—At Quarantine under the Stars and Stripes—"God Save the Queen!" and "Hail to the Chief!"—"Received and Interviewed"—"Portia on a Trip from the Venetian Seas"—What the Reporters think, and what Irving says—The Necessity of Applause—An Anecdote of Forrest—Mr. Vanderbilt and the Mirror—Miss Terry and the Reporters—"Tell them I never loved home so well as now"—Landed and Welcomed—Scenes on the Quay—At the Brevoort.

I.

Four o'clock in the morning, October 21, 1883. A cheerful gleam of light falls upon a group of Lotos guests, as they separate at the hospitable door-way of that famous New York club. Otherwise Fifth Avenue is solitary and cold. The voices of the clubmen strike the ear pleasantly. "Going to meet Irving," you

hear some of them say, and "Good-night," the others. Presently the group breaks up, and moves off in different directions. "I ordered a carriage at the Brevoort House," says one of the men who pursue their way down Fifth Avenue. They are the only persons stirring in the street. The electric arcs give them accompanying shadows as black as the night-clouds above them. The Edison lamps exhibit the tall buildings, sharp and clear, against the darkness. Two guardians of a carpet-store, on the corner of Fourteenth Street, sleep calmly among the show bales that decorate the side-walk. An empty car goes jingling along into Union Square. A pair of flickering lights are seen in the distance. They belong to "the carriage at the Brevoort House." It will only hold half our number. The civilities that belong to such a situation being duly exchanged, there are some who prefer to walk; and an advance is made on foot and on wheels towards the North River.

For my own part I would, as a rule, rather walk than ride in a private carriage in New York. The street cars and the elevated railroad are comfortable enough; but a corduroy road in a forest-track is not more emphatic in its demands upon the nerves of a timid driver than are the pitfalls of a down-town street in the Empire city. I nevertheless elect to ride. We are four; we might be any number to one who

should attempt to count us, so numerous does the jolting of our otherwise comfortable brougham appear to make us. We are tossed and pitched about as persistently as we might be in a dinghy during a gale off some stormy headland. Presently the fresh breeze of the river blows upon us, as if to justify the simile; then we are thrown at each other more violently than ever; a flash of gaslight greets us; the next moment it is dark again, and we stop with alarming suddenness. "Twenty-second Street Pier," says our driver, opening the door. We are received by a mysterious officer, who addresses us from beneath a world of comforters and overcoats. "Want the *Blackbird?*" he asks. We do. "This way," he says. We follow him, to be ushered straightway into the presence of those active scouts and skirmishers of the American press—the interviewers. Here they are, a veritable army of them, on board Mr. Starin's well-known river steamer, the *Blackbird*, their wits and their pencils duly sharpened for their prey. Youth and age both dedicate themselves to this lively branch of American journalism. I tell a London friend who is here to "mind his eye," or they may practise upon him, and that if he refuses to satisfy their inquiries they may sacrifice him to their spleen; for some of them are shivering with cold, and complaining that they have had no rest. Finding an English artist here from the

Illustrated London News, I conduct him secretly to the "ladies' cabin." It is occupied by a number of mysterious forms, lying about in every conceivable posture; some on the floor, some on the sofas; their faces partially disguised under slouch hats, their figures enveloped in cloaks and coats. They are asleep. The cabin is dimly lighted, and there is an odour of tobacco in the oily atmosphere. "Who are they?" asks my friend in a whisper. "Interviewers!" I reply, as we slip back to the stove in the saloon. "What a picture Doré would have made of the ladies' cabin!" says the English artist.

II.

We encounter more new-comers in the saloon. Two of them bring copies of the morning papers. I recognize several of the interesting crowd, and cannot help telling them something of the conversation of the Beefsteak Club Room guest, who drew their pictures in London, as a warning to the traveller whom they were going to meet. I find them almost as ill-informed, and quite as entertaining, concerning Irving's mannerisms, as was the traveller in question touching their own occupation. They talk very much in the spirit of what has recently appeared here in some of the newspapers about Irving and his art-methods. New York, they say, will not be dictated to by London; New York

judges for itself. At the same time they do not think it a generous thing on the part of the London *Standard* to send a hostile editorial *avant-courier* to New York, to prejudice the English actor's audiences and his critics.[1] Nor do they think this "British malevo-

[1] The following cablegram appeared in the *Herald* on October the 18th, and it was alluded to in the editorial columns as "a hint" which "will not be lost upon the theatrical critics:"—

"*London*, Oct. 17, 1883.

"The *Standard*, in an editorial this morning, thus appeals to America for a dispassionate judgment of Henry Irving:—

"American audiences have a favourable opportunity of showing that they can think for themselves, and do not slavishly echo the criticisms of the English press. We confess that, though one has read many eulogistic notices of Mr. Irving, and listened in private to opinions of different complexions, it is difficult to find anything written respecting him that deserves to be dignified with the description of serious criticisms. Cannot New York, Boston, and Chicago supply us with a little of this material? Are we indulging vain imaginings if we hope that our cousins across the water will forget all that has been said or written about Irving and the Lyceum company this side of the ocean, and will go to see him in his chief performances with unprejudiced eyes and ears, and send us, at any rate, a true, independent, unconventional account of his gifts and graces, or the reverse?"

"Most Englishmen naturally will be gratified if the people of the United States find Irving as tragic, and Miss Terry as charming, as so many people in this country consider them. But the gratification will be increased, should it be made apparent that a similar conclusion has been arrived at by the exercise of independent judgment, and if in pronouncing it fresh light is thrown upon the disputed points of theatrical controversy."

lence" will have any effect either way, though the *Standard* practically proclaims Mr. Irving and Miss Terry as impostors. This article has been printed by the press, from New York to San Francisco, while the Lyceum company and its chief are on the Atlantic. I have often heard it said in England that Irving had been wonderfully "worked" in America. Men who are worthy to have great and devoted friends unconsciously make bitter enemies. Irving is honoured with a few of these attendants upon fame. If the people who regard his reputation as a thing that has been "worked" could have visited New York a week before his arrival, they could not have failed to be delighted to see how much was being done against him and how little for him. An ingenious and hostile pamphleteer was in evidence in every bookseller's window. Villainous cheap photographs of "actor and manager" were hawked in the streets. Copies of an untruthful sketch of his career, printed by a London weekly, were circulated through the mails. The *Standard's* strange appeal to New York, Boston, and Chicago was cabled to the *Herald*, and republished in the evening papers. Ticket speculators had bought up all the best seats at the Star Theatre, where the English actor was to appear, and refused to sell them to the public except at exorbitant and, for many playgoers, prohibitive rates. So far as "working" went,

the London enemies of the Lyceum manager were so actively represented in New York that his friends in the Empire city must have felt a trifle chilled at the outlook. The operations of the ticket speculators, it must, however, be admitted, seemed to project in Irving's path the most formidable of all the other obstacles.

III.

But Irving's ship is sailing on through the darkness while I have been making this "aside," and the *Blackbird* is in motion; for I hear the swish of the river, and the lights on shore are dancing by the port-holes. Mr. Abbey's fine military band, from the Metropolitan Opera House, has come on board; so also has a band of waiters from the Brunswick. Breakfast is being spread in the saloon. The brigands from the ladies' cabin have laid aside their slouch hats and cloaks. They look as harmless and as amiable as any company of English journalists. Night and dark-lanterns might convert the mildest-mannered crowd into the appearance of a pirate crew.

I wish the Irving guest of my first chapter could see and talk to these interviewers. I learn that they represent journals at Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, and other cities besides New York. One of them has interviewed Lord Coleridge; another was

with Grant during the war; a third was with Lee. They have all had interesting experiences. One is an Englishman; another hails from "bonnie Scotland." There is no suggestion of rowdyism among them. I owe them an apology on the "excuse accuse" principle, for saying these things; but the "interviewer" is not understood in England; he is often abused in America, and I should like to do him justice. These gentlemen of the press, who are going out to meet Irving, are reporters. Socially they occupy the lowest station of journalism, though their work is of primary importance. Intellectually they are capable men, and the best of them write graphically and with an artistic sense of the picturesque. They should, and no doubt do, develop into accomplished and powerful journalists; for theirs is the best of education. They study mankind; they come in contact with the most prominent of American statesmen; they talk with all great foreigners who visit the United States; they are admitted into close intercourse with the leading spirits of the age; they have chatted on familiar terms with Lincoln, Sheridan, Grant, Garfield, Huxley, Coleridge, Arnold, Patti, Bernhardt, Nilsson, and they will presently have added to the long list of their personal acquaintances Irving and Miss Terry. They are travellers, and, of necessity, observers. Their press-card is a talisman that opens to them all doors of

current knowledge; and I am bound to say that these men on board the *Blackbird* are, in conversation and manners, quite worthy of the trust reposed in them by the several great journals which they represent.

IV.

"BRITANNIC ahead!" shouts a voice from the gangway. We clamber on deck. It is daylight. The air is still keen. The wooded shores of Staten Island are brown with the last tints of autumn. Up the wide reaches of the river, an arm of the great sea, come all kinds of craft: some beating along under sail; others, floating palaces, propelled by steam. These latter are ferry-boats and passenger steamers. You have seen them in many a marine picture and panorama of American travel. The *Blackbird* is typical of the rest,—double decks, broad saloons, tiers of berths, ladies' cabins, and every ceiling packed with life-buoys in case of accident. We push along through the choppy water, our steam-whistle screaming hoarse announcements of our course. The *Britannic* lies calmly at quarantine, the stars and stripes at her topmast, the British flag at her stern. She is an impressive picture,—her masts reaching up into the gray sky, every rope taut, her outlines sharp and firm. In the distance other ocean steamers glide towards us,

attended by busy tugs and handsome launches. One tries to compare the scene with the Mersey and the Thames, and the only likeness is in the ocean steamers, which have come thence across the seas. For the rest, the scene is essentially American,—the broad river, the gay wooden villas ashore, the brown hills, the bright steam-craft on the river, the fast rig of the trading schooners, and above all the stars and stripes of the many flags that flutter in the breeze, and the triumphant eagles that extend their golden wings over the lofty steerage turrets of tug and floating palace.

Now we are alongside the *Britannic*. As our engines stop, the band of thirty Italians on our deck strikes up "God save the Queen." One or two British hands instinctively raise one or two British hats, and many a heart, I am sure, on board the *Britannic* beats the quicker under the influence of the familiar strains. A few emigrants, with unkempt hair, on the after-deck, gaze open-mouthed at the *Blackbird*. Several early risers appear forward and greet with waving hands the welcoming crowd from New York. One has time to note the weather-beaten colour of the *Britannic's* funnels.

"What sort of a passage?" cries a voice, shouting in competition with the wind, that is blowing hard through the rigging.

"Pretty rough," is the answer.

"Where is Mr. Irving?" cries out another *Blackbird* passenger.

"In bed," is the response.

"Oh!" says the interrogator, amidst a general laugh.

"Beg pardon, no," presently shouts the man on the *Britannic*,—"he's shaving."

Another laugh, drowned by a salute of some neighbouring guns. At this moment a boat is lowered from the splendid yacht *Yosemite*, which has been steaming round about the *Britannic* for some time. It is Mr. Tilden's vessel. He has lent it to Mr. Lawrence Barrett and Mr. William Florence. They have come out to meet Irving and Miss Terry, with a view to carry them free from worry or pressure to their several hotels. The two well-known actors are in the yacht's pinnace, and some of us wonder if they are good sailors. The waves, which do not stir the *Britannic*, and only gently move the *Blackbird*, fairly toss the *Yosemite's* boat; but the occupants appear to be quite at home in her. She disappears around the *Britannic's* bows to make the port side for boarding, and as she does so Mr. Irving suddenly appears between the gangway and the ship's boats, on a level with the deck of the *Blackbird*, about midships. "There he is!" shout a score of voices. He looks pale in the cold, raw light; but he smiles pleasantly, and takes

off a felt bowler hat as the *Blackbird* gives him a cheer of welcome.

"Won't you come here? The quarantine authorities object to our visiting the ship until the doctor has left her."

A plank is thrust from our paddle-box, Irving climbs the *Britannic's* bulwark, and grasps a hand held out to steady him as he clambers aboard the *Blackbird*, right in the midst of the interviewers. Shaking hands with his manager, Mr. Abbey, and others, he is introduced to some of the press-men, who scan his face and figure with undisguised interest. By this time Messrs. Barrett and Florence appear on the *Britannic*. They have got safely out of their boat, and have a breezy and contented expression in their eyes. Irving now recrosses the temporary gangway, and is fairly embraced by his two American friends. The band strikes up, "Hail to the Chief!" Then the gentlemen of the press are invited to join Mr. Irving on board the *Yosemite*. They are arrested by what one of them promptly designates "a vision of pre-Raphaelitish beauty." It is Miss Ellen Terry.[2] Every hat goes off

[2] The *Tribune's* reporter drew Miss Terry's picture with studied elaboration:—

"As she stepped with a pretty little shudder over the swaying plank upon the yacht she showed herself possessed of a marked individuality. Her dress consisted of a dark greenish-brown cloth wrap, lined inside with a peculiar shade of red; the

as she comes gaily through the throng. "Portia, on a trip from the Venetian seas!" exclaims an enthusiastic young journalist, endeavouring to cap the æsthetic compliment of his neighbour. Escorted by Mr. Barrett, and introduced by Mr. Irving, she is deeply moved, as well she may be, by the novel scene. *Britannic* passengers crowd about her to say good-bye; the band is playing "Rule, Britannia;" many a gay river boat and steamer is navigating the dancing waters; the sun is shining, flags fluttering, and a score of hands are held out to help Portia down the gangway on board the *Yosemite*, which is as trim and bright and sturdy in its way as a British gun-boat. While the heroine of the trip is taking her seat on deck, and kissing her hand to the *Britannic*, the *Yosemite* drives ahead of the ocean steamer. Mr. Irving goes down into the spacious cabin, which is crowded with the gentlemen against whose sharp and inquisitive interrogations he has been so persistently warned.

inner dress, girt at the waist with a red, loosely-folded sash, seemed a reminiscence of some eighteenth-century portrait, while the delicate complexion caught a rosy reflection from the loose flame-coloured red scarf tied in a bow at the neck. The face itself is a peculiar one. Though not by ordinary canons beautiful, it is nevertheless one to be remembered, and seems to have been modelled on that of some pre-Raphaelitish saint,—an effect heightened by the aureole of soft golden hair escaping from under the plain brown straw and brown velvet hat."

v.

"Well, gentlemen, you want to talk to me?" he says, lighting a cigar, and offering his case to his nearest neighbours.

The reporters look at him and smile. They have had a brief consultation as to which of them shall open the business, but without coming to any definite arrangement. Irving, scanning the kindly faces, is no doubt smiling inwardly at the picture which his London friend had drawn of the interviewers. He is the least embarrassed of the company. Nobody seems inclined to talk; yet every movement of Irving invites interrogatory attack.

"A little champagne, gentlemen," suggests Mr. Florence, pushing his way before the ship's steward and waiters.

"And chicken," says Irving, smiling; "that is how we do it in London, they say."

This point is lost, however, upon the reporters, a few of whom sip their champagne, but not with anything like fervour. They have been waiting many hours to interview Irving, and they want to do it. I fancy they are afraid of each other.

"Now, gentlemen," says Irving, "time flies, and I have a dread of you. I have looked forward to this meeting, not without pleasure, but with much appre-

hension. Don't ask me how I like America at present. I shall, I am sure; and I think the bay superb. There, I place myself at your mercy. Don't spare me."

Everybody laughs. Barrett and Florence look on curiously. Bram Stoker, Mr. Irving's acting manager, cannot disguise his anxiety. Loveday, his stage-manager and old friend, is amused. He has heard many curious things about America from his brother George, who accompanied the famous English comedian, Mr. J. L. Toole (one of Irving's oldest, and perhaps his most intimate, friend), on his American tour. Neither Loveday nor Stoker has ever crossed the Atlantic before. They have talked of it, and pictured themselves steaming up the North River into New York many a time; but they find their forecast utterly unlike the original.

"What about his mannerisms?" says one reporter to another. "I notice nothing strange, nothing *outré* either in his speech or walk."

"He seems perfectly natural to me," the other replies; and it is this first "revelation" that has evidently tongue-tied the "reportorial" company. They have read so much about the so-called eccentricities of the English visitor's personality that they cannot overcome their surprise at finding themselves addressed by a gentleman whose grace of manner

reminds them rather of the polished ease of Lord Coleridge than of the *bizarre* figure with which caricature, pictorially and otherwise, has familiarized them.

"We are all very glad to see you, sir, and to welcome you to New York," says one of the interviewers, presently.

"Thank you, with all my heart," says Irving.

"And we would like to ask you a few questions, and to have you talk about your plans in this country. You open in 'The Bells,'—that was one of your first great successes?"

"Yes."

"You will produce your plays here just in the same way as in London?" chimes in a second interviewer.

"With the same effects, and, as far as possible, with the same cast?"

"Yes."

"And what are your particular effects, for instance, in 'The Bells' and 'Louis XI.,' say, as regards mounting and lighting?"

"Well, gentlemen," answers Irving, laying aside his cigar and folding his arms, "I will explain. In the first place, in visiting America, I determined I would endeavour to do justice to myself, to the theatre, and to you. I was told I might come alone as a star,

or I might come with a few members of my company, and that I would be sure to make money. That did not represent any part of my desire in visiting America. The pleasure of seeing the New World, the ambition to win its favour and its friendship, and to show it some of the work we do at the Lyceum,—these are my reasons for being here. I have, therefore, brought my company and my scenery. Miss Ellen Terry, one of the most perfect and charming actresses that ever graced the English stage, consented to share our fortunes in this great enterprise; so I bring you almost literally the Lyceum Theatre."

"How many artists, sir?"

"Oh, counting the entire company and staff, somewhere between sixty and seventy, I suppose. Fifty of them have already arrived here in the *City of Rome*."

"In what order do you produce your pieces here?"

"'The Bells,' 'Charles,' 'The Lyons Mail,' 'The Merchant of Venice,' we do first."

"Have you any particular reason for the sequence of them?"

"My idea is to produce my Lyceum successes in their order, as they were done in London; I thought it would be interesting to show the series one after the other in that way."

"When do you play 'Hamlet?'"

"On my return to New York in the spring."

"Any special reason for that?"

"A managerial one. We propose to keep one or two novelties for our second visit. Probably we shall reserve 'Much Ado' as well as 'Hamlet.' Moreover, a month is too short a time for us to get through our *répertoire*."

"In which part do you think you most excel?"

"Which do you like most of all your range of characters?"

"What is your opinion of Mr. Booth as an actor?"

These questions come from different parts of the crowd. It reminds me of the scene between an English parliamentary candidate and a caucus constituency, with the exception that the American questioners are quite friendly and respectful, their chief desire evidently being to give Mr. Irving texts upon which he can speak with interest to their readers.

"Mr. Booth and I are warm friends. It is not necessary to tell you that he is a great actor. I acted with him many subordinate parts when he first came to England, about twenty years ago."

"What do you think is his finest impersonation?"

"I would say 'Lear,' though I believe the American verdict would be 'Richelieu.' Singularly enough

'Richelieu' is not a popular play in England. Mr. Booth's mad scene in 'Lear,' I am told, is superb. I did not see it; but I can speak of Othello and Iago: both are fine performances."

"You played in 'Othello' with Mr. Booth in London, you say?"

"I produced 'Othello' especially for Mr. Booth, and played Iago for the first time on that occasion. We afterwards alternated the parts."

"Shakespeare is popular in England,—more so now than for some years past, I believe?"

"Yes."

"What has been the motive-power in this revival?"

"England has to-day many Shakespearian societies, and our countrymen read the poet much more than they did five-and-twenty years ago. As a rule our fathers obtained their knowledge of him from the theatre, and were often, of course, greatly misled as to the meaning and intention of the poet, under the manipulation of Colley Cibber and others."

"Which of Shakespeare's plays is most popular in England?"

"'Hamlet.' And, singularly, the next one is not 'Julius Cæsar,' which is the most popular after 'Hamlet,' I believe, in your country. 'Othello' might possibly rank second with us, if it were not difficult to get two equally good actors for the two

leading parts. Salvini's Othello, for instance, suffered because the Iago was weak."

"You don't play 'Julius Cæsar,' then, in England?"

"No. There is a difficulty in filling worthily the three leading parts."

By this time Mr. Irving is on the most comfortable and familiar terms with the gentlemen of the press. He has laid aside his cigar, and smiles often with a curious and amused expression of face.

"You must find this kind of work, this interviewing, very difficult," he says, presently, in a tone of friendly banter.

"Sometimes," answers one of them; and they all laugh, entering into the spirit of the obvious fun of a victim who is not suffering half as much as he expected to do, and who indeed is, on the whole, very well satisfied with himself.

"Don't you think we might go on deck now and see the harbour?" he asks.

"Oh, yes," they all say; and in a few minutes the *Yosemite's* pretty saloon is vacated.

Mr. Irving and his friends go forward; Miss Terry is aft, in charge of Mr. Barrett. She is looking intently down the river at the far-off *Britannic*, which is now beginning to move forward in our wake, the *Yosemite* leaving behind her a long, white track of foam.

The interviewers are again busily engaged with Mr. Irving. He is once more the centre of an interested group of men. Not one of them takes a note. They seem to be putting all he says down in their minds. They are accustomed to tax their memories. One catches, in the expression of their faces, evidence of something like an inter-vision. They seem to be ticking off, in their minds, the points as the speaker makes them; for Irving now appears to be talking as much for his own amusement as for the public instruction. He finds that he has a quick, intelligent, and attentive audience, and the absence of note-books and anything like a show of machinery for recording his words puts him thoroughly at his ease. Then he likes to talk "shop," as who does not? And what is more delightful to hear than experts on their own work?

"Do your American audiences applaud much?" he asks.

"Yes," they said; "oh, yes."

"Because, you know, your Edwin Forrest once stopped in the middle of a scene and addressed his audience on the subject of their silence. 'You must applaud,' he said, 'or I cannot act.' I quite sympathize with that feeling. An actor needs applause. It is his life and soul when he is on the stage. The enthusiasm of the audience reacts upon him. He gives them back heat for heat. If they are cordial, he is

encouraged; if they are excited, so is he; as they respond to his efforts he tightens his grip upon their imagination and emotions. You have no pit in your American theatres, as we have; that is, your stalls, or parquet, cover the entire floor. It is to the quick feelings and heartiness of the pit and gallery that an actor looks for encouragement during his great scenes in England. Our stalls are appreciative, but not demonstrative. Our pit and gallery are both."

Irving, when particularly moved, likes to tramp about. Whenever the situation allows it, he does so upon the stage. Probably recalling the way in which pit and gallery rose at him—and stalls and dress circle, too, for that matter—on his farewell night at the Lyceum, he paces about the deck, all the interviewers making rapid mental note of his gait, and watching for some startling peculiarity that does not manifest itself.

"He has not got it; why, the man is as natural and as straight and capable as a man can be," says one to another.

"And a real good fellow," is the response. "Ask him about Vanderbilt and the mirror."

"Oh, Mr. Irving!—just one more question."

"As many as you like, my friend," is the ready reply.

"Is it true that you are to be the guest of Mr. Vanderbilt?"

"And be surrounded with ingeniously-constructed mirrors, where I can see myself always, and all at once. I have heard strange stories about Mr. Vanderbilt having had a wonderful mirror of this kind constructed for my use, so that I may pose before it in all my loveliest attitudes. Something of the kind has been said, eh?" he asks, laughing.

"Oh, yes, that is so," is the mirthful response.

"Then you may contradict it, if you will. You may say that I am here for work; that I shall have no time to be any one's guest, though I hope the day may come when I shall have leisure to visit my friends. You may add, if you will" (here he lowered his voice with a little air of mystery), "that I always carry a mirror of my own about with me wherever I go, because I love to pose and contemplate my lovely figure whenever the opportunity offers."

"That will do, I guess," says a gentleman of the interviewing staff; "thank you, Mr. Irving, for your courtesy and information."

"I am obliged to you very much," he says, and then, having his attention directed to the first view of New York, expresses his wonder and delight at the scene, as well he may.

Ahead the towers and spires of New York stand out in a picturesque outline against the sky. On either hand the water-line is fringed with the spars of ships

and steamers. On the left stretches far away the low-lying shores of New Jersey; on the right, Brooklyn can be seen, rising upwards, a broken line of roofs and steeples. Further away, joining "the city of churches" to Manhattan, hangs in mid-air that marvel of science, the triple carriage, foot, and rail road known as the Brooklyn Bridge. Around the *Yosemite*, as she ploughs along towards her quay, throng many busy steamers, outstripping, in the race for port, fleets of sailing vessels that are beating up the broad reaches of the river before the autumn wind.

VI.

"She is not quite pretty," says a New York reporter, turning to me during his contemplation of Miss Terry, who is very picturesque, as she sits by the taffrail at the stern; "but she is handsome, and she is distinguished. I think we would like to ask her a few questions; will you introduce us?"

I do the honours of this presentation. Miss Terry is too much under the influence of the wonderful scene that meets her gaze to receive the reporters with calmness.

"And this is New York!" she exclaims. "What a surprising place! And, oh, what a river! So different to the Thames! And to think that I am in New York! It does not seem possible. I cannot realize it."

"If you had a message to send home to your friends, Miss Terry, what would it be?" asks Reporter No. 1, a more than usually bashful young man.

The question is a trifle unfortunate.

"Tell them I never loved home so well as now," she answers in her frank, impulsive way.

She turns her head away to hide her tears, and Reporter No. 2 remonstrates with his companion.

"I wouldn't have said it for anything," says No. 1. "I was thinking how I would add a few words for her to my London cable,—that's a fact."

"It is very foolish of me, pray excuse me," says the lady; "it is all so new and strange. I know my eyes are red, and this is not the sort of face to go into New York with, is it?"

"I think New York will be quite satisfied, Miss Terry," says a third reporter; "but don't let us distress you."

"Oh, no, I am quite myself now. You want to ask me some questions?"

"Not if you object."

"I don't object; only you see one has been looking forward to this day a long time, and seeing land again and houses, and so many ships, and New York itself, may well excite a stranger."

"Yes, indeed, that is so," remarks No. 1, upon whom she turns quickly, the "Liberty" scarf at

her neck flying in the wind, and her earnest eyes flashing.

"Have you ever felt what it is to be a stranger just entering a strange land? If not, you can hardly realize my sensations. Not that I have any fears about my reception. No, it is not that; the Americans on the ship were so kind to me, and you are so very considerate, that I am sure everybody ashore will be friendly."

"Do you know Miss Anderson?"

"Yes. She is a beautiful woman. I have not seen her upon the stage; but I have met her."

"Do you consider 'Charles I.' will present you to a New York audience in one of your best characters?"

"No; and I am not very fond of the part of Henrietta Maria either."

"What are your favourite characters?"

"Oh, I hardly know," she says, now fairly interested in the conversation, and turning easily towards her questioners for the first time. "I love nearly all I play; but I don't like to cry, and I cannot help it in 'Charles I.' I like comedy best,—Portia, Beatrice, and Letitia Hardy."

"Do you intend to star on your own account?"

"No, no."

"You prefer to cast your fortunes with the Lyceum company?"

"Yes, certainly. Sufficient for the day is the Lyceum thereof. There is no chance of my ever desiring to change. I am devoted to the Lyceum, and to Mr. Irving. No one admires him more than I do; no one knows better, I think, how much he has done for our art; no one dreams of how much more he will yet do if he is spared. I used to think, when I was with Charles Kean,—I served my apprenticeship, you know, with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean,—that his performances and mounting of plays were perfect in their way. But look at Mr. Irving's work; look at what he has done and what he does. I am sure you will be delighted with him. Excuse me, is that the *Britannic* yonder, following in our wake?"

"Yes."

She kisses her hand to the vessel, and then turns to wonder at the city, which seems to be coming towards us, so steadily does the *Yosemite* glide along, hardly suggesting motion.

Then suddenly the word is passed that the *Yosemite* is about to land her passengers. A few minutes later she slips alongside the wharf at the foot of Canal Street. The reporters take their leave, raising their hats to Miss Terry, many of them shaking hands with Mr. Irving. Carriages are in waiting for Mr. Barrett and his party. A small crowd, learning who the new-comers were, give them a cheer of welcome,

and Henry Irving and Ellen Terry stand upon American soil.

"I am told," says Mr. Irving, as we drive away, "that when Jumbo arrived in New York he put out his foot and felt if the ground was solid enough to bear his weight. The New Yorkers, I believe, were very much amused at that. They have a keen sense of fun. Where are we going now?"

"To the Customs, at the White Star Wharf, to sign your declaration papers," says Mr. Florence.

"How many packages have you in your state-room, madame?" asks a sturdy official, addressing Miss Terry.

"Well, really I don't know; three or four, I think."

"Not more than that?" suggests Mr. Barrett.

"Perhaps five or six."

"Not any more?" asked the official. "Shall I say five or six?"

"Well, really, I cannot say. Where's my maid? Is it important,—the exact number?"

There is a touch of bewilderment in her manner which amuses the officials, and everybody laughs—she herself very heartily—when her maid says there are fourteen packages of various kinds in the state-room of the *Britannic*, which is now discharging her passengers. A scene of bustle and excitement is developing just as we are permitted to depart. A

famous politician is on board. There is a procession, with a band of music, to meet him. Crowds of poor people are pushing forward for the *Britannic* gangway, to meet a crowd of still poorer emigrant friends. Imposing equipages are here to carry off the rich and prosperous travellers. Tons of portmanteaus, trunks, boxes, baggage of every kind, are sliding from the vessel's side upon the quay. Friends are greeting friends. Children are being hugged by fathers and mothers. Ships' stewards are hurrying to and fro. The express man, jingling his brass checks, is looking for business; his carts are fighting their way among the attendant carriages and more ponderous waggons. A line of Custom-house men form in line, a living cord of blue and silver, across the roadway exit of the wharf. There is a smell of tar and coffee and baked peanuts in the atmosphere, together with the sound of many voices; and the bustle repeats itself outside in the rattle of arriving and departing carts and carriages. Above all one hears the pleasant music of distant car-bells. We dash along, over level crossings, past very continental-looking river-side *cabarets* and rum-shops, under elevated railroads, and up streets that recall Holland, France, Brighton, and Liverpool, until we reach Washington Square. The dead leaves of autumn are beginning to hide the fading grass; but the sun is shining gloriously away up in a

blue sky. Irving is impressed with the beauty of the city as we enter Fifth Avenue, its many spires marking the long line of street as far as the eye can see. The Brevoort House has proved a welcome, if expensive, haven of rest to many a weary traveller. To-day its bright windows and green sun-blinds, its white marble steps, and its wholesome aspect of home-like comfort suggest the pleasantest possibilities.

Let us leave the latest of its guests to his first experiences of the most hotel-keeping nation in the world.

III.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

Union Square, New York—An enterprising Chronicler—The Lambs—The Newspapers and the New-comers—"Art must advance with the Times"—"Romeo and Juliet" at the Lyceum—"Character Parts"—No real Tradition of Shakespearian Acting—"Mannerisms"—The Stage as an Educator—Lafayette Place—A notable little Dinner—The great American Bird, "Not the Eagle, but the Duck"—A Question of "Appropriate Music"—Speculators in Tickets and their enormous Profits—Middlemen, the Star Theatre, and the play-going Public.

I.

"It is not like my original idea of it, so far," said Irving the next morning,—"this city of New York. The hotel, the Fifth Avenue, the people,—everything is a little different to one's anticipations; and yet it seems to me that I have seen it all before. It is London and Paris combined. I have been round to call on Miss Terry. She is at what she calls 'The Hotel—ahem!'—the Hotel Dam, in Union Square. Dam is the proprietor. It is a handsome house. A fine

square. The buildings are very tall. The cars, running along the streets, their many bells, the curious, wire-drawn look of the wheels of private carriages,—all a little odd. Fifth Avenue is splendid! And what a glorious sky!"

He rattled on, amused and interested, as he stood in the back room of his suite of three on the ground floor at the Brevoort.

"Several interviewers in there," he said, pointing to the folding-doors that shut us out from the other apartment. "One reporter wanted to attend regularly and chronicle all I did,—where I went to, and how; what I ate, and when; he wished to have a record of everybody who called, what they said, and what I said to them."

"An enterprising chronicler; probably a 'liner,' as we should call him on the other side,—a liner unattached."

"He was very civil. I thanked him, and made him understand that I am modest, and do not like so much attention as he suggests. But these other gentlemen, let us see them together."

It was very interesting to hear Irving talk to his visitors, one after the other, about his art and his work. I had never seen him in such good conversational form before. So far from resisting his interrogators, he enjoyed their questions, and, at the

same time, often puzzled them with his answers. Some of his visitors came with minds free and unprejudiced to receive his impressions, with pens ready to record them. Others had evidently read up for the interview; they had turned over the pages of Hazlitt, Lamb, and Shakespeare with a purpose. Others had clearly studied the ingenious pamphlet of Mr. Archer; these had odd questions to ask, and were amazed at the quickness of Irving's repartee. As a rule they reported the new-comer correctly. The mistakes they made were trivial, though some of them might have seemed important in prejudiced eyes. I propose, presently, to give an example of this journalistic work.

After dinner Mr. Irving went to a quiet little reception at the house of a friend, and at night he visited the Lambs Club. The members are principally actors, and Sunday night is their only holiday. Once a month they dine together. On this night they held their first meeting of the season. The rooms were crowded. Irving was welcomed with three cheers. Mr. William Florence, Mr. Raymond, Mr. Henry Edwards, Mr. Howson, and other well-known actors introduced him to their brother members, and a committee was at once formed to arrange a date when the club could honour itself and its guest with a special dinner.

"It is very delightful to be so cordially received," said Irving, "by my brother actors. I shall be proud

to accept your hospitality on any evening that is convenient to you. It must be on a Sunday, of course. I am told New York is strict in its observance of Sunday. Well, I am glad of it—it is the actor's only day of rest."

II.

On Monday morning the newspapers, from one end of the United States to the other, chronicled the arrival of Mr. Irving and Miss Terry. The New York journals rivalled each other in columns of bright, descriptive matter, with headings in more than customary detail. The *Herald* commenced its announcement in this way :—

IRVING—TERRY.

Arrival of the Famous English Actor and the Leading Lady of the Lyceum.

A Hearty Welcome Down the Bay by Old Friends.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. IRVING.

His Views on the Drama and Stage of To-day

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

The *Sun* greeted its readers with,—

UP EARLY TO MEET IRVING!

A BUSINESS-LIKE HAMLET AND A JOLLY OPHELIA ARRIVE.

What the Famous English Actor Looks Like and How He Talks—A Stentorian Greeting Down at Quarantine before Breakfast.

The morning *Journal* (the latest success in cheap newspaper enterprise) proclaimed :—

ENGLAND'S GREAT ACTOR.

Henry Irving Cordially Welcomed in the Lower Bay.

He Tells of His Hopes and Fears, and Expresses Delight over Dreaded Newspaper Interviewers— Miss Terry Joyful.

A leading Western journal pays a large salary to a clever member of its staff, whose duty is confined to the work of giving to the varied news of the day attractive titles. The New York press is less exuberant in this direction than formerly.

The sketches of the arrival of the *Britannic's* passengers are bright and personal. They describe the appearance of Mr. Irving and Miss Terry. The

vivacity of Miss Terry charmed the reporters. The quiet dignity of Irving surprised and impressed them. The "interviews" generally referred to Mr. Irving's trip across the Atlantic, his programme for New York, his hopes of a successful tour, his ideas of the differences between American and English theatres, what he thought of Booth, and other points which I have myself set forth, perhaps more in detail than was possible for the journals, and, what is more important, from the platform of an interested English spectator. The following conversation is, in the main, a revised edition of an interview that appeared in the *Herald.*

"And now to speak to you of yourself as an actor, and also of your theatre,—let me ask you, to what mainly do you attribute your success?"

"The success I have made, such as it is, has been made by acting—by acting alone, whether good or bad."[1]

[1] These simple facts prove that, aside from his acting, with which it is not our duty to deal at present, Mr. Irving is one of the most remarkable men of this or any other age. But he is unquestionably right when he asserts that he owes his success to his acting alone. It has been said that the splendid manner in which he puts his plays upon the stage is the secret of his popularity; but he first became popular in plays which were not splendidly mounted, and his greatest financial and artistic successes have been made in pieces upon which he expended no unusual decorations. It has been said that Manager Bateman made Irving; but, as we shall presently prove, Irving made

"There is a notion in America, Mr. Irving, that your extraordinary success is due to your *mise en scène* and the research you have given to the proper mounting of your pieces."

"Indeed, is that so? And yet 'The Cup' and 'Romeo and Juliet' were the only two pieces I have done in which the *mise en scène* has been really remarkable. During my early association with the Lyceum nothing of that kind was attempted. For instance, the churchyard scene in 'Hamlet' was a scene painted for 'Eugene Aram,' as the then manager of the Lyceum (my old friend, Mr. Bateman) did not believe in the success of 'Hamlet.' The run of

Manager Bateman in London, and has been doubly successful since Manager Bateman's death. It has been said that his leading lady, Ellen Terry, is the Mascot of Irving's career; but his fame was established before Miss Terry joined his company, and he has won his proudest laurels in the plays in which Miss Terry has not appeared. It has been said that the financial backing of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts gave Irving his opportunity; but he had been overcrowding the London Lyceum for years before he made the acquaintance of the Baroness. No; the unprecedented and unrivalled success of Mr. Irving has been made by himself alone. He became popular as an actor in a stock company; his popularity transformed him into a star and a manager; and, as a star and a manager, he has widened, deepened, and improved his popularity. He has won his position fairly, by his own talents and exertions, against overwhelming odds, and he has nobody to thank for it but himself, in spite of the theories which we have exploded.—*Spirit of the Times, New York, Oct.* 27, 1883.

the play was two hundred nights. I have been associated with the Lyceum since 1871, eleven years, and, until the production of 'The Corsican Brothers' and 'The Cup,' in 1880-81, no play in which I acted had ever been elaborately mounted. Before the time of these plays I had acted in 'The Bells,' 'Charles I.,' 'Eugene Aram,' 'Philip,' 'Richelieu,' 'Hamlet,' 'Macbeth,' 'Louis XI.,' 'Othello,' 'Richard III.,' 'The Merchant of Venice,' 'The Iron Chest,' and others; and this, I think, is sufficient answer to the statement that my success has, in any way, depended upon the mounting of plays. When I played 'Hamlet,' under my own management, which commenced in December, 1878, I produced it with great care; and many things, in the way of costume and decoration, which had been before neglected, I endeavoured to amend. But take, for instance, 'The Merchant of Venice,'—it was put upon the stage in twenty-three days."

"It will be impossible for managers to go back to the bad system of mounting formerly in vogue, will it not?"

"I think so. Indeed, it is impossible for the stage to go back to what it was in any sense. Art must advance with the times, and with the advance of other arts there must necessarily be an advance of art as applied to the stage. In arranging the scenery for 'Romeo and Juliet' I had in view not only the pro-

ducing of a beautiful picture, but the illustration of the text. Every scene I have done adds to the poetry of the play. It is not done for the sake of effect merely, but to add to the glamour of the love story. That was my intention, and I think that result was attained. I believe everything in a play that heightens and assists the imagination, and in no way hampers or restrains it, is good, and ought to be made use of. I think you should, in every respect, give the best you can. For instance, Edwin Booth and I acted together in 'Othello.' He alone would have drawn a great public; yet I took as much pains with it as any play I ever put upon the stage. I took comparatively as much pains with the 'Two Roses' and the 'Captain of the Watch' as with 'Romeo and Juliet.' But there is no other play in Shakespeare that seems to me to so much require a pictorial setting as 'Romeo and Juliet.' You could not present plays nowadays as they formerly did, any more than you could treat them generally as they were treated."

"How did you come to identify yourself so much with the revival of Shakespearian acting?"

"I will try to tell you briefly what I have done since I have been before the London public. Much against the wish of my friends, I took an engagement at the Lyceum, then under the management of Mr. Bateman. I had successfully acted in many plays besides the

'Two Roses,' which ran three hundred nights. It was thought by everybody interested in such matters that I ought to identify myself with what they called 'character parts;' though what that phrase means, by the way, I never could exactly understand, for I have a prejudice in the belief that every part should be a character. I always wanted to play in the higher drama. Even in my boyhood my desire had been in that direction. When at the Vaudeville Theatre I recited the drama of 'Eugene Aram,' simply to get an idea as to whether I could impress an audience with a tragic theme. I hoped I could, and at once made up my mind to prepare myself to play characters of another type. When Mr. Bateman engaged me, he told me he would give me an opportunity, if he could, to play various parts, as it was to his interest as much as to mine to discover what he thought would be successful—though, of course, never dreaming of 'Hamlet' or 'Richard III.' Well, the Lyceum opened, but did not succeed. Mr. Bateman had lost a lot of money, and he intended giving it up. He proposed to me to go to America with him. By my advice, and against his wish, 'The Bells' was rehearsed, but he did not believe in it much. He thought there was a prejudice against the management, and that there would probably be a prejudice against that sort of romantic play. It produced a very poor

house, although a most enthusiastic one. From that time the theatre prospered. The next piece was a great difficulty. It was thought that whatever part I played it must be a villain, associated with crime in some way or other; because I had been identified with such sort of characters, it was thought my *forte* lay in that direction. I should tell you that I had associated histrionically with all sorts of bad characters, housebreakers, blacklegs, assassins. When 'Charles I.' was announced, it was said that the bad side of the king's character should be the one portrayed, not the good, because it would be ridiculous to expect me to exhibit any pathos, or to give the domestic and loving side of its character. After the first night the audience thought differently. Following 'Charles I.' 'Eugene Aram' was, by Mr. Bateman's desire, produced. In this we have a character much like that of Mathias, but with a pathetic side to it. Then Mr. Bateman wished me to play 'Richelieu.' I had no desire to do that, but he continued to persuade, and to please him I did it. It ran for a long time with great success. What I did play, by my own desire, and against his belief in its success, was 'Hamlet;' for you must know that at that time there was a motto among managers,—'Shakespeare spells bankruptcy.'"

"What is your method in preparing to put a play on

the stage?—say one of Shakespeare's,—would you be guided by the tradition of Shakespearian acting?"

"There is no tradition of Shakespearian acting; nor is there anything written down as to the proper way of acting Shakespeare. We have the memoirs and the biographies of great actors, and we know something of their methods; but it does not amount to a tradition or to a school of Shakespearian acting. For instance, what is known on the stage of Shakespeare's tradition of Richard? Nothing. The stage tradition is Colley Cibber. 'Off with his head—so much for Buckingham!' is, perhaps, the most familiar line of his text. We have had some men who have taken this or that great actor as their exemplar; they have copied him as nearly as they could. Actors, to be true, should, I think, act for themselves."

"You would advise an actor, then, to go to the book and study the play out for himself, and not take this or that character by rote?"

"Certainly; take the book, and work the play out to the best of your intelligence. I believe my great safeguard has been that I have always tried to work out a character myself. As a boy I never would see a play until I had studied it first."

"That would be an answer to the strictures which have been made on you, that you have not kept to the old acting versions, but have made versions for yourself?"

"True; and why should I not, if I keep, as I do, to Shakespeare? For many actors Shakespeare was not good enough. A picture which hangs in my rooms affords an instance in point. It represents Mr. Holman and Miss Brunton in the characters of Romeo and Juliet, and gives a quotation from the last scene of Act V. Juliet says,—'You fright me. Speak; oh, let me hear some voice beside my own in this drear vault of death; or I shall faint. Support me.' Romeo replies,—'Oh! I cannot. I have no strength, but want thy feeble aid. Cruel poison!' Not one word of which, as you know, is Shakespeare's."

"You referred just now to the necessity of an actor acting 'from himself;' in other words, not sinking his own individuality in the part he is trying to represent,—would it not be an answer to those who charge you with mannerisms on the stage? Is it not true, in short, that the more strongly individual a man is, the more pronounced his so-called mannerisms will be?"

"Have we not all mannerisms? I never yet saw a human being worth considering without them."

"I believe you object to spectators being present at your rehearsals. What are your reasons for that course?"

"There are several, each of which would be a valid objection."

"For instance?"

"Well, first of all, it is not fair to author, manager, or actor, as the impression given at an incomplete performance cannot be a correct one."

"But surely by a trained intellect due allowance can be made for shortcomings?"

"For shortcomings, yes; but a trained intellect cannot see the full value of an effort, perhaps jarred or spoiled through some mechanical defect; or if the trained intellect knows all about it, why needs it to be present at all? Now, it seems to me that one must have a reason for being present, either business or curiosity; and business cannot be properly done, while curiosity can wait."

"Another reason?"

"It is unjust to the artists. A play to be complete must, in all its details, finally pass through one imagination. There must be some one intellect to organize and control; and in order that this may be effected, it is necessary to experimentalize. Many a thing may be shown at rehearsal which is omitted in representation. If this be seen, and not explained, a false impression is created. A loyal company and staff help much to realize in detail and effect the purpose of the manager; but still, all are but individual men and women, and no one likes to be corrected or advised before strangers."

"As to the alleged dearth of good modern English plays, what do you think is the cause of their non-production?"

"I deny the dearth, except so far as there is always a dearth of the good things of the world. I hold that there are good English plays. I could name you many."

"What are your opinions of the stage as an educational medium? I ask the question, because there is a large class of people, both intelligent and cultured, who still look upon the stage and stage plays, even if not downright immoral, as not conducive to any intellectual or moral good."

"My dear sir, I must refer you to history for an answer to that problem. It cannot be solved on the narrow basis of one craft or calling. Such ideas are due to ignorance. Why, in England, three hundred years ago,—in Shakespeare's time,—in the years when he, more than any other human being in all that great age of venture and development, of search and research, was doing much to make the era famous, actors were but servants, and the stage was only tolerated by court licence. A century later, in London city, actors were pilloried and the calling deemed vagrancy; while in France a Christian burial was denied to Molière's corpse. The study of social history and development teaches a lesson in which you may read your answer.

When bigotry and superstition fade and toleration triumphs, then the work of which the stage is capable will be fairly judged, and there will be no bar to encounter. The lesson of toleration is not for the player alone ; the preacher must learn it."

III.

The first week in New York was, in a great measure, spent between the theatre and the hotel. Invitations to dinner and receptions were, as a rule, declined. The exceptions were breakfasts given by Mr. Vanderbilt and Judge Shea. Many distinguished persons called. All kinds of polite attentions were offered, some of which, it is to be feared, Irving had not time or opportunity to acknowledge as he could have wished. One gentleman placed his carriage at Mr. Irving's disposal ; another offered to lend him his house ; another his steam launch. These courtesies were tendered gracefully and without ostentation. Flowers were sent regularly from unknown hands to the Hotel Dam. Miss Terry went driving with friends in the park, and found the trotting-track a fascinating scene. Within forty-eight hours Irving was a familiar figure in the lower part of Fifth Avenue and Union Square, as he walked to and from the theatre. He and Miss Terry made their first acquaintance at Delmonico's in company with myself and wife. An elegant little

dinner, of which the ice creams were its most successful feature. Artistic in construction, they were triumphs of delicate colour. I think they were the *chef's* tributes to Miss Terry's supposed æsthetic taste. No wonder the Delmonicos made millions of dollars, when it is possible that the chief reminiscence of a dinner may be associated with the ice creams and sweets. On Tuesday, after a rehearsal and a drive down town on a pouring wet day, I piloted the new-comer to Sieghortner's, in Lafayette Place. This well-known *café* occupies the house in which the Astors lived. It is a building characteristic of the early days of New York's first millionaires,—marble steps, heavy mahogany doors, rich Moorish decorations, spacious hall-ways. Close by is the Astor Library, a valuable institution, and the street itself has quite an Old-World look. It was once the most fashionable quarter of New York; but wealth has moved towards the park, and left Lafayette Place to restaurants, boarding-houses, public-baths, and stores. Sieghortner himself is a typical Dutchman, a veritable Knickerbocker of hotel-keepers, and a *gourmet*. He is almost the only "landlord" (as we should call him at home) in New York who will condescend to wait upon his guests. It is a pleasure to look upon his beaming face when you order a dinner and leave *menu* and wines to his judgment. As he stands by your chair, directing his attendants, he is radiant with

satisfaction if you are pleased, and would no doubt be plunged into despair if you were dissatisfied. Shrewsbury oysters, gumbo soup, cutlets, canvas-back ducks, a *soufflé*, Stilton cheese, an ice, a *liqueur*, a dish of fruit, and a bottle of hock that filled the room with its delicious perfume.

"It was perfection, Mr. Sieghortner," said Irving, as he sipped his coffee, and addressed the old man,—"the canvas-back superb. You are so interested in the art of dining that you will appreciate a little experience of mine in connection with the great American bird,—I don't mean the eagle, but the duck."

Sieghortner rubbed his hands, and said, "Oh, yes,—why, of course!"

"An old American friend of mine,—dead now, alas!—when he was in his prime, as they say, frequently had numbers of canvas-back ducks sent to London from New York. On the first great occasion of this kind he invited thirty guests to eat thirty ducks. He spent a day or two instructing the *chef* of a well-known club how to cook them. The kitchen was to be well heated, you know, and the ducks carried gently through."

"Oh, yes, that's the way," said Sieghortner, rubbing his hands.

"Well, the night came. His guests were in full force. The ducks were served. They had a whity-

brown and flabby appearance. Bateman cut one and put it aside. He tried another, and in his rage flung it under the table. The dinner was an utter failure."

"Dear! dear!" exclaimed Sieghortner.

"My friend did not forget it for months. He was continually saying, 'I wonder how that fool spoiled our ducks; I have tried to find out, but it is a mystery.' Nearly a year afterwards I heard of the *chef's* sudden death. Meeting my friend, I said, 'Have you heard of poor So-and-so, the *chef* at the club?—he is dead!'—'I am very glad of it!' he exclaimed. 'Do you know, he cooked those ducks over the gas!'"

"Dear! dear!" exclaimed Sieghortner, a quick expression of anger on his face, "why, he ought to have been hanged!"

IV.

It is customary in American theatres for the orchestra to play the audience out as well as in.

"We will dispense with that," said Irving to his conductor, Mr. Ball.

"It is a general habit here," remarked the Star manager.

"Yes, I understand so," Irving replied; "but it seems to me a difficult matter to select the music appropriately to the piece. What sort of music do you usually play?"

"A march."

"Ah, well, you see our plays are so different, that a march which would do one night would be entirely out of place the next. Have you the score of 'The Dead March in Saul?'"

"No," was the conductor's reply.

"Well, then, I think we will finish as we do in London,—with the fall of the curtain. If we make a failure on Monday night, the most appropriate thing you could play would be 'The Dead March.' As you have no score of it, we will do without the exit music."

"And who knows," said Irving, as we walked back to the hotel, "whether we shall have a success or not? The wild manner in which the speculators in tickets are going on is enough to ruin anything.[2] They have

[2] Speculation in theatre tickets seems now to have reached its height. Folks thought it had come to a lively pass when Sarah Bernhardt was here, and some $23,000 worth of seats were disposed of for her engagement on the opening day of the sale. But, bless you, that was a mere drop in the bucket. A man named McBride, who has from keeping a small news-stand gradually come forward until he is now one of the richest of the ticket speculators, "got left," as he picturesquely observed, on the Bernhardt affair. In other words, rival speculators got all the best seats. So McBride put twelve men on duty in front of the Star Theatre box-office three days before the Irving sales were to open, and there they stayed on duty day and night until the window was finally thrown open. Each one of these men got ten season tickets for the Irving engagement, which is

bought up every good seat in the house, I am told, and will only part with them at almost prohibitive

to last four weeks. In other words, every one of these men bought 280 tickets of admission to the Star Theatre, so that McBride now holds for the Irving season a neat little pile of 3360 tickets. They were bought at season ticket prices of $60 per set of twenty-eight, and therefore cost the speculator the sum of $7200. Now you will see how the speculator happens to have the bulge on the Irving management. The box-office price of a ticket for a single performance is $3, and even if the demand should not happen to be as immense as to warrant a long advance on the box-office tariff, McBride can sell his tickets at the regular price of $3 apiece, and get the sum of $10,080 for them, which will leave him a profit of nearly $3000 upon his short investment. There is, however, little or no likelihood that he will be obliged to resort to this manner of doing business. For the first night he has already sold seats for $10 and $15 each, and it is quite reasonable to suppose that as the time approaches, and tickets become scarce, he can advance to a still higher price. These ticket speculators have regular customers, who willingly pay them the ordinary price they ask rather than bother about going to the box-office. When Anna Dickinson wants to visit a theatre in New York, she invariably buys her tickets of Tyson, who charges her $2 for a $1.50 seat. So it is with a good many other people, particularly the rich and reckless down-town brokers, who purchase their tickets during the day, and who, rather than take the trouble to send a messenger away up to the theatre they intend to visit, go to the speculator's branch office and pay the advance demanded for whatever they want. There are only a few regular ticket speculators in New York. Old Fred Rullman, a Dutchman, was for a long time the chief operator in theatre tickets, but he seldom appears nowadays in any of the big deals. He works mostly in opera tickets, and is contented not to take heavy risks. McBride is the longest chance-taker of the lot. Tyson is not a risky buyer, but confines his purchases pretty closely

prices. The play-goers may resent their operations and keep away; if they pay ten and twenty dollars for a seat, instead of two and a half or three, they cannot be expected to come to the house in a contented frame of mind. The more money they have been plundered of, the more exacting they will be in regard to the actors; it is only natural they should. Then we have no pit proper, and the lowest admission price to the gallery is a dollar. I would have preferred to play to Lyceum prices; but in that case they say I should only have been putting so much more into the pockets of the speculators. These operators in tickets are protected by the law; managers are obliged to sell to them, and the dealers have a right to hawk them on the pavement at the entrance of the theatres."

"This is a State or city law, only applying to New York. I don't think it exists anywhere else in the Union. It certainly does not at Philadelphia and Boston."

"It is an outrage on the public," he replied. "Legitimate agencies for the convenience of the public, with a profit of ten or twenty per cent. to the vendor, is one thing; but exacting from the public five and ten dollars for a two and a half dollar seat is another.

to the demands of his regular customers.—*New York Correspondent of St. Louis Spectator.*

After all, a community, however rich, have only a certain amount of money to spend on amusements. Therefore the special attractions and the speculators get the lion's share, and the general or regular amusements of the place have to be content with short commons."

"If the *Sun* reporter could hear you, he would congratulate himself on having called you 'a business-like Hamlet.'"

IV.

AT THE LOTOS CLUB.

The Savage Club of America—Thackeray and Lord Houghton —A great Banquet—Mr. Whitelaw Reid on Irving and the Actor's Calling—"Welcome to a country where he may find not unworthy brethren"—An Answer to the Warnings of the English Traveller of Chapter I.—"Shakespeare's Charles the First"—A Night of Wit and Humour —Chauncey M. Depew on Theatrical Evolution—The Knighting of Sullivan—The Delineator of Romance visiting the Home of America's Creator of Romance—After-dinner Stories—Conspiring against the Peace of a harmless Scotchman—A pleasant Jest.

I.

The Lotos Club is the Savage of America, as the Century is its Garrick; each, however, with a difference. The Lotos admits to membership gentlemen who are not necessarily journalists, authors, actors, and painters, earning their subsistence out of the arts. They must be clubable and good fellows in the estimation of the committee, and herein lies their best qualification. This combination of the arts proper

with trade and finance has made the club a success in the broadest sense of the term. Their home is a palace, compared with that of the Savage in London. The general atmosphere of the Century is more akin to that of the Garrick, and it is a far closer corporation than the Lotos. Mr. Thackeray spent a good deal of his time there when he was in New York; while Lord Houghton, it is said, preferred the more jovial fireside of the Lotos. In those days the younger club was in humbler, but not less comfortable, quarters than those it now occupies; while the Century, conservative and conscious of its more aristocratic record, is well content with the house which is associated with many years of pleasant memories.

The Lotos honoured Irving with a banquet; the Century welcomed him at one of its famous monthly reunions. The Lotos dinner was the first public recognition, outside the press, of Irving in America. He had accepted its invitation before sailing for New York, and sat down with the Lotos-eaters on the Saturday (October 27) prior to his Monday night's appearance at the Star Theatre. The club-rooms had never been so crowded as on this occasion. Dishes were laid for a hundred and forty members and guests in the dining-room and *salon* of the club, and fifty others consented to eat together in the restaurant and reading-room upstairs, and fifty or sixty others had to be content to

come in after dinner. Mr. Irving sat on the right hand of the President of the club, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, editor of the *Tribune*. At the same table were Chauncey M. Depew, Dr. A. E. Macdonald, General Horace Porter, E. Randolph Robinson, Algernon S. Sullivan, R. B. Roosevelt, Thomas W. Knox, H. H. Gorringe, W. H. Smith, Rev. Robert Laird Collier, and F. R. Lawrence. Among others present were Lawrence Barrett, Joseph Jefferson, William J. Florence, R. W. Gilder, Dr. Fordyce Barker, D. G. Croly, General Winslow, and A. Oakey Hall. In a window alcove behind the President's chair stood an easel, holding a large portrait of Irving as Shylock.

Coffee being served, Mr. Irving was conducted upstairs to be introduced to the diners in his honour who were crowded out of the lower rooms. They received him with a loud cheer, and then accompanied him to join the other guests. The company broke up into groups, stood about the door-ways, and thronged around the President, who thereupon arose and addressed them as follows:—

"You must excuse the difficulty in procuring seats. You know the venerable story which Oscar Wilde appropriated about the sign over the piano in a far-western concert-hall: 'Don't shoot the performer; he's doing the best he can.' (Laughter.) The com-

mittee beg me to repeat in their behalf that touching old appeal. They've done the best they could. There are five hundred members of this club, and only one hundred and forty seats in this dining-room; they have done their utmost to put the five hundred men into the one hundred and forty seats. Don't shoot. They'll come down, apologize, retreat, resign—do anything to please you. They've thoroughly tried this thing of putting two men in one seat and persuading the other three that standing-room is just as good; and to-night, as the perspiration rolls from their troubled brows, their fervent hope and prayer is that the manager for your distinguished guest may be haunted by that self-same trouble all through his American tour! (Applause and laughter.)

"London appropriated our national anniversary, to do honour to its favourite actor as he was about to visit us. On that occasion, on the Fourth of July last, at a banquet without a parallel in the history of the British stage, and to which there are actually none to be compared, save the far less significant, but still famous, entertainments to Kean and Macready,—at that banquet your guest said, 'This God-speed would alone insure me a hearty welcome in any land. But I am not going among strangers. I am going among friends.' (Applause.)

"Let us take him at his word. Once we were apt

to get our opinions from the other side. If that grows less and less a habit now, with the spread among us, since we attained our national majority, of a way of doing our own thinking, we are still all the more glad to welcome friendships from the other side.

"We know our friendly guest as the man whom a great, kindred nation has agreed to accept as its foremost living dramatic representative. We know that his success has tended to elevate and purify the stage, to dignify the actor's calling, to widen and better its influence. We know the scholarship he has brought to the representation of the great dramatists, the minute and comprehensive attention he has given to every detail, alike of his own acting and of the general management. His countrymen do not say that if he were not the foremost actor in England he would be the first manager; they declare that he is already both. (Applause.)

"We bid him the heartiest of welcomes to a country where he may find not unworthy brethren. Our greeting indeed takes a tone of special cordiality not so much from what we know of his foreign repute, or from our remembering the great assemblage of representative countrymen gathered to give him their farewell and God-speed. It comes even more from our knowing him as the friend of Edwin Booth (applause), and Joseph Jefferson (applause), and Lawrence Bar-

rett (applause), and John McCullough (applause), and William Florence (applause). And if anything else were needed to make the grasp of every man's hand in this club yet warmer, it is furnished when we remember that his conspicuous friend among English actors is our friend, John Toole. (Applause.)

"It would not be fair to our distinguished but unsuspicious guest, adventuring into these foreign parts, if, before sitting down, I did not warn him that all this, and much more which he is likely to hear, is said around the dinner-table. Let him not think that he wholly knows us, and is fairly naturalized, until he has read the papers the morning after his first performance. What they may contain no living man knoweth (laughter); but others have sometimes groaned that we treat our guests with too much attention; that we accord them, in fact, the same distinguished honour we give our national bird—the turkey,—which we first feed and afterwards carve up. (Great laughter.)

"But the prologue is an antiquated device, now pretty well banished from the stage, because it merely detains you from what you came to hear. I will detain you no longer. I give you, gentlemen, Our Guest,—

'O trumpet set for Shakespeare's lips to blow.'

"Health to Henry Irving, and a hearty welcome!" (Great applause.)

II.

THE toast was drunk with ringing cheers, and in its report of the reply the *Tribune* says, "Mr. Irving spoke in measured tones, and with a singularly clear and effective enunciation, his frequent ironical sallies being received with bursts of laughter and applause." He said:—

"Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—It is not in my power to thank you, with eloquence, for the reception that you have given me to-night. In spite of the comforting words and suggestions of our friend, the chairman, that on Tuesday morning my feelings may undergo a change, I am quite determined that to-night and to-morrow night, if all be well, I shall have a good night's rest. I *do* feel naturalized; and, whatever may be said to the contrary, I shall always bear away with me the impression that I am among my own flesh and blood. (Applause.) The simile of the turkey did not affect me very much; for if the ill-omened bird (I do not know whether he is as familiar in your country as he is in mine), the *goose*, is not served up, I shall be very content. (Applause.)

"You have received me, not as a stranger, but as a welcome friend (applause), and that welcome I appreciate with all my heart and soul. In coming here

amongst you I really had—I may as well confess it—but one terror. The Atlantic I would brave; the wind and weather I would scorn; even sea-sickness I would enjoy; but there was one terror,—the interviewer. (Laughter.) But I am very glad to tell you that that is passed; and I have said so much to the interviewer that I have very little left to say to you. I must, however, also tell you that I find the interviewer a very much misrepresented person. He seemed to me to be a most courteous gentleman, who had but an amiable curiosity to know a little about myself that he did not know before; and I was very well satisfied to gratify him as much as I could. I was told that he would turn me inside out; that he would cross-examine me, and then appear against me the following morning. (Laughter.) But I found nothing of the sort; and if I had any complaint to make against him, the comments with which he tempered his suggestions were so flattering and so gratifying to myself that I forgave him the suggestions that he made. The only thing that I would quarrel with him for was for saying that I reminded him of Oscar Wilde. (Laughter.) Oscar Wilde is a very clever fellow, and I am not going to descant upon him. You know more about him than I do; and I hope that when Oscar Wilde reads what I have said—as I suppose he will—he will take no offence. I am extremely in-

debted to the interviewer, also, for telling me that I was classed with Edwin Booth. With that I have no fault to find.

"To the courtesy and kindness of American gentlemen I have long been accustomed; for if you have not in London, as you have in Paris, an American quarter, it is really because Americans are found everywhere in London; and I think that everywhere in London they are welcome. (Applause.) Our interests are mutual; and in our art we are getting day by day more closely allied. London is now talking with raptures of your Mary Anderson (applause); of your great tragedian, Booth (applause); of your great comedian, Jefferson (applause)—I dislike the words 'tragedian' and 'comedian;' actor is so much better, and it is a household word. McCullough and Clarke, and my friends Florence and Raymond, have had amongst us the heartiest of welcomes. And I am quite sure that your famous actress, Clara Morris, need only come amongst us—as my friend, Lawrence Barrett, is coming—to have another welcome.

"Mr. Whitelaw Reid has spoken of my work in my art in the kindest and most appreciative way. If I have done anything to gain that commendation, it is because I have striven to do my duty; and but for the appreciation of many of my countrymen, who have thought so, and but for the appreciation that I receive

now at this table, I am quite sure that my work would have been in vain.

"I do not intend to bore you with any ideas of mine about my art, either histrionically or pictorially. My method, histrionically, is a very simple one. I merely endeavour to go to the fountain-head to get my inspiration; and by what my work is I know that you will judge it, and judge it fairly. I am quite sure of this: that no people will go to a theatre with a greater desire to do justice to an actor than you will go to the theatre to see me on Monday night. (Applause.) If you like me, you will express it; and, if you do not like me, still you will treat me kindly.

"Our art is cosmopolitan. Every actor has his own methods, as every painter has his methods, and every writer has his style. The best actor amongst us has a great deal to learn. It is only at the end of his career that he finds how short is his life, and how long is his art. Concerning the mounting of plays, I give to a play of Shakespeare the same advantage that I would give to any modern author; and, until a greater man than Shakespeare arrives, I think I shall continue to do so. (Applause.)

"In my own dear land I am glad to tell you that the love for Shakespearian drama is very greatly increasing. Shakespearian societies throughout our land have done much to encourage that. You know very

well that there was a time when Shakespeare was said by a London manager to spell 'bankruptcy,' and Lord Byron 'ruin.' I remember that at one of the revivals of Shakespearian plays at the Lyceum, a gentleman leaving the theatre was heard to express the opinion that the play was not a bad one; that he thought it might have a tolerable run, but that it would be very much improved if it had not contained so many quotations. (Laughter.) The play was 'Macbeth.' (Laughter.) I have been told that that gentleman is sometimes to be found in the British Museum, in the old reading-room devoted to Shakespearian manuscripts, and that he is very frequently found turning them over; but with what success I do not know. I also remember that once, when a play was produced, a friend of mine asked me what the subject of it was. I said to him that the subject was Charles I., at which he hemmed and hawed and said, 'Very good; *very* good; oh, capital! Charles I. Yes, I should think that would do very well. Let me see. Charles I. Do you mean Shakespeare's Charles I.?' (Laughter.) However, these things are improving, and even the old play-goer,—I do not know whether such a character exists amongst you,—who is amongst us a very dreadful creature; even he is beginning to tolerate the student who goes to the book, instead of to traditional characters, for his inspiration.

"We are very hypocritical, however, some of us, in England. We go to the Crystal Palace to see the play of 'Hamlet,' and go to the Crystal Palace because it is not a theatre; and when we would not go to a theatre to see the play of 'Hamlet,' we will go to the Crystal Palace, or some other such place, to see the 'Pink Dominoes.' (Laughter.) We will crowd sometimes to the French theatre, without understanding the nationality, the gesture of the actors, or a word of their language, when we will desert our own theatres where these pieces are being played. But fortunately no such difference as that can exist between us; and I cherish the hope that it will be my good fortune, and more especially the good fortune of my fellow-workers, and especially of my gifted companion and friend, Ellen Terry (Great applause),—I say that I cherish the hope that we shall be able to win your favour. (Applause.) I dare say that you will find many of us very strange and very odd, with peculiarities of speech, and with peculiarities of manner and of gesture; but it would, perhaps, not be so pleasurable if we were all just alike. (Laughter.) It is not our fault, you know, if we are Englishmen.

"Gentlemen, I thank you with all my heart for the greeting you have given me. I thank you for the brotherly hand that you have extended to me. And if anything could make one feel at home, and comfort-

able, and sure of having a real good time amongst you, it is the cordiality with which I have been received to-night. The very accents of your hearty greeting, and the very kindness of your genial faces, tell me that there are in your hearts good and kind overflowing wishes. Gentlemen, I thank you with all my heart; and I feel that there is a bond between us which dates before to-night."

The speaker sat down amidst great applause. His manner and matter had evidently given great satisfaction. How he had been misrepresented as to his mannerisms is unconsciously admitted by the note of the *Tribune* reporter, that he spoke clearly. He did; and in that quiet, self-possessed, conversational style which was remarked as so effective at the London banquet.

III.

As it was generally admitted that the speaking on this night had never been exceeded in wit and humour, and for its cordiality towards a famous Englishman, at any of the Lotos dinners, I make no apology for printing portions of the other addresses. Mr. Chauncey M. Depew, General Porter, and ex-Mayor Oakey Hall have long since made distinct reputations for themselves as American orators. At an English dinner men speak to set toasts. In America they are called upon

frequently without warning to speak to a sentiment, or "to say a few words." It was in this fashion that the speakers at the Irving banquet were brought into the extemporized programme, and with the most agreeable results. Mr. Chauncey M. Depew, being asked by the chairman to speak, rose promptly, amidst the clouds of many Havannas, and said:—

"Mr. President,—The best criticism that was made upon the speech of our guest to-night was, 'He talks like an American.' I am sure that this memorable night will be recollected from the fact that, in the midst of the din of wars and contests and controversies about us, this is simply a peaceful tribute on behalf of this club to one of the chief and most devoted of the exponents of the drama. We have welcomed to this country recently many eminent Englishmen, and among them Lord Coleridge, whom we were glad to see and to honour, both for what he is and what he represents. We have received, at the same time with Mr. Irving, Matthew Arnold, and while as a great thinker we give him welcome, we warn him that orthodoxy has for him its scalping-knife sharp, and that the theological hatchet is thirsting for his gore. (Laughter.)

"The whole town is in a din and furore with the operatic war, and tenors are peeping over high 'C's' to get at each other, while sopranos are hauled before the courts. (Laughter.) Mapleson walks around with the

chip on his shoulder, and Abbey calls upon the police to prevent him from hurting somebody. (Laughter.)

"But while this controversy rages we meet here to-night, with one voice and one accord, to welcome the most eminent dramatic scenic painter of this century and the most eminent English actor of this generation. (Applause.) We have welcomed to this board many men from beyond the seas, and, while they have poured something into this vast reservoir of intellectual wealth, we have done more for them. Lord Houghton asserts that his health and longevity after his reception here were largely due to the fact that he learned at this place the way to longevity by a cheap and frugal meal. (Laughter.) From this board Sullivan arose to become a knight. (Laughter and applause.) We are all of us familiar with the oratory which usually characterizes an expression of the relations between the old country and the new. There is nothing better known in the whole range of eloquence than that which refers to the interdependent relations, in respect to literature and science and art, between America and England. While this chord is familiar, there is one string which is not often touched, and that is the debt we owe to the English thinkers, Huxley, Tyndall, and Darwin, who have created the shibboleth known in all the schools of America, that evolution is the great principle of modern science.

"While the most of us believe in evolution in theory, in practice we have seen it only upon the stage. The Englishman, from whom our Yankee inherits commercial instincts, saw our want and supplied it. First he sent to us Lydia Thompson and her troupe. (Laughter.) And then the shrewd Englishman sent us 'Pinafore.' We were at first fascinated, then charmed, and then annihilated. We could stand 'Pinafore' for six hundred consecutive nights in all the theatres, to the exclusion of everything else; in the parlour, upon the piano, in the school-room, on the hurdy-gurdy, and on the hand-organ; but when the church choir could do nothing else, then there arose a cry for relief from one end of this country to the other. (Great laughter.) The like of that cry has never been heard since the children of Israel sought to escape from Egypt. (Renewed laughter.) Then, in recognition of his great service, Queen Victoria summoned the author to her presence, and said to him, 'For one hundred years I have sought to subdue those children of ours beyond the seas, but without avail; but for your grand success arise and take your place with the knights of armour.' (Great laughter.)

"There is nothing which more clearly indicates the development of this American people from provincialism and its bigotry than the welcome given to Macready, and that which we accord to Irving. To

secure a hearing for Macready required that the soldiery should march with fixed bayonets and shotted guns, while the blood of the mob poured through the gutter. But now the American people have developed into a recognition of the fact that to be a great people they must adopt that catholicity that embraces men all over the world; that, while they may believe in Protection for textile fabrics and manufactures, there must be Free Trade in genius. (Applause.)

"We hail, with the gladdest acclaim and heartiest welcome, the German Barnay, the Italian Salvini, and the English Irving, because we wish to have the best the world has of art in any of its departments, and because we want to show them that their success is incomplete until they have passed the ordeal of American criticism. (Applause.) The very best tribute of recent times to the sentiment of right-minded men of culture and intelligence on both sides of the Atlantic, notwithstanding what demagogues may say, is that a London audience crowded the house and rose to the highest enthusiasm to greet the appearance and applaud the acting of the American, Edwin Booth (applause); and its counterpart will be the reciprocity manifested by the American people in crowding the house and applauding the acting of Henry Irving. (Applause.) Still, in illustration of the same idea, while London renders her most gene-

rous tribute to the beauty and genius of Mary Anderson, we here, with an equal chivalry, will receive with our best loyalty that beautiful, charming, and genial woman, that brilliant actress, that great genius, Ellen Terry." (Great applause.)

General Horace Porter, being called up by the President, assured the company that he was really not prepared to speak. He said he felt considerably embarrassed. His audience evidently did not believe him, and he amply justified their scepticism. In an easy, conversational manner he said :—

"I do not even feel that security which was enjoyed by Daniel in the lions' den, for he had the comfortable assurance that as these animals had their original programme, although he might be eaten, it was not likely that he would be called upon for an after-dinner speech. (Laughter.) But if there is any stimulus which can arouse the most sluggish mind, it has been abundantly furnished to-night by the finished and chaste address which has fallen from the lips of our distinguished guest. He has shown us to-night how well qualified he is to furnish us with that dish which I know is so much relished in his own country—after-dinner tongue, garnished with brains. Standing, as we do, in the presence of so distinguished a representative of that profession which is accustomed to speak the carefully prepared words of the dramatists, I would not be sur-

prised to hear our guest say, in the language of Romeo to Juliet in the balcony scene, as he listens to my ill-considered words, 'He speaks, yet he says nothing.' (Laughter.) I hope Mr. Irving is beginning to understand that speech is the peculiar form of insanity that comes upon the American mind after dinner, and that here men keep silent only when they are salivated. (Laughter.) Our guest, no doubt, begins to realize what this martyrdom is. By the time he is ready to depart from us he will, no doubt, have greater respect than ever before for the beneficence of that Providence which has endowed us with two ears and only one mouth. (Laughter.) But this martyrdom to-night does not seem to be of the nature of the martyrdom of Charles I., for throughout it all he has not lost his head. It seems to be rather that martyrdom of Cranmer—he has been so thoroughly toasted on every side. (Laughter.) But there is one privilege that Mr. Irving must not expect to enjoy. When German and French artists came here they enjoyed a special and peculiar privilege; they were not able to understand a word that was said by the speakers. (Laughter.)

"But I cannot sit down without saying a few words in all seriousness. It is that this club considers that it enjoys a peculiar privilege in having the distinguished guest of the night partaking of his first family meal

within our land in these walls. (Applause.) It has been a cherished desire on the part of this club to press the cup of greeting to his lips. We recognize in him the masterly interpreter of the sublime works of that prince of dramatists whom both countries claim as their own. He comes amongst us with a name that is no stranger to our hearts. In his coming here I see the great delineator of romance visiting the land of our most charming creator of romance, Henry Irving visiting the home of Washington Irving. The American people feel under a deep sense of obligation to our guest, because when that great representative of the American drama set foot upon foreign shores the lips that gave him the warmest greeting, the hands that led him to the boards of London's most distinguished temple of the drama, were those of Henry Irving. He shared equally with Booth the honours of his own stage; and laid down the principle that has become a law, which declares the path of ambition is never so narrow that two cannot walk abreast upon it.

"It was my privilege a year ago to hear Mr. Irving in his own home. It was my privilege to feast my vision upon the masterly creations of the stage of the Lyceum. There one saw at once the reality of painting. There the curtain rises upon absolute perfection. If I were asked the secret of his success, I should say it is owing to his constant aspirations after the highest

realms of dramatic art. I would that words or deeds of mine could add to the warmth of the welcome he has received." (Loud applause.)

Dr. A. E. Macdonald, ex-Mayor A. Oakey Hall, Dr. Robert Laird Collier, Mr. Joseph Jefferson, and other gentlemen also responded to the chairman's call. Dr. Macdonald indulged in some good-humoured sallies at the expense of Mr. Depew. He also spoke of the New York press having "only just arrived at a proper estimate of its true value,—the result being a general reduction in price to two cents." Mr. Oakey Hall, referring to the many streets and buildings he had been officially called upon to name, said, "I now, in memory of this night, declare that the window recess in which our illustrious guest is sitting shall, from henceforth, be known as 'The Henry Irving!'" Mr. Jefferson said, "Gentlemen, Charles Lamb is reported to have declared that there are only two classes in the world—one born to borrow, and the other to lend. So do I think there are two classes of speech-makers,—one born to get into it, the other to get out of it. I belong to the latter crowd. Nevertheless on this occasion I rise cheerfully to do my best among the born talkers. Mr. Irving must be getting tired of hearing his name mentioned so often with words of welcome and admiration, and I will only say that I join heartily in all the kind and worthy things that have been said of him."

IV.

It was late before the Lotos eaters parted, although London clubmen take more out of the night than is the habit with New-Yorkers. The raciness of the evening's speeches was repeated in the stories that were told by the genial few, who sat and talked and smoked with their guest, until Fifth Avenue was as quiet and deserted as it was when a crowd of admiring friends went out to meet the *Britannic* a week previously. Apropos of an amusing anecdote, with a practical joke in it, which was related, I think, by Colonel Knox, the courteous honorary secretary of the club, Irving said, "I am not much of a hand at that kind of fun, but I remember an incident in which my old friend Toole, a Glasgow doctor, and myself were engaged, that may amuse you. Some years ago we found ourselves with a holiday forced upon us by the Church of Scotland. We utilized it by going out a short distance into the country and dining together at a famous roadside inn. The house was quite empty of guests, and we claimed the privilege of travellers, on our way to the next town, to sit over our dinner a trifle later than it was the custom to keep the bar open. The landlord was very civil, and we had an excellent dinner. The waiter who attended to our wants was a quaint old fellow—one of those rugged sort of serving-men with whom Sir

Walter Scott has made us all so well acquainted. While he was respectful, he was, nevertheless, very talkative. He told us there had been of late many robberies in the neighbourhood. The constabulary, he said, were quite out of their reckoning in regard to tracing the thieves. He wondered if the country was going back again to the coaching days when cracksmen and highwaymen had it all their own way in those parts. The old fellow was a little superstitious too, and a lover of the marvellous, as many of the country people who live outside great cities are apt to be.

"'You seem a trifle hipped,' I said; 'take a glass of wine.'

"'I am just a wee bit low,' he said; 'what wi' the bad weather, the dull times—'

"'And the robberies you've lately had about here,' I suggested.

"'Ah, weel, they're nae calculated to raise one's sperits. Good health to you, gentlemen!'

"We thanked him, and I filled his glass again.

"'This house,' said Toole, 'is rather a lonely place; you don't have many guests staying here?'

"'Not at this time o' the year,' he replied; 'only just chance customers.'

"I filled his glass again before he went for the cheese. When he came back I took up a fork, and expressed some surprise that the master should, in

these thieving days, entrust his guests with real silver plate.

"'I dinna bring it oot for everybody,' he replied; 'but for a pairty o' gentlemen like yoursels, it's a defferent thing.'

"'Is the salver there,' asked Toole, taking up the running and pointing to the sideboard, 'real silver?'

"'Indeed it is, and all the plate aboot is silver, and I ken they dinna mak' sich silver nowadays.'

"'Bring us a little whisky!— a pint in a decanter; a drop of the best,' I said.

"Having planted the right kind of seed in his mind for the working of a little jest I had in my own, my companions and myself entered into a conspiracy against the peace of this harmless Scotchman. Invited to take a nip of whisky, he readily complied, and just as readily took a seat. We drew him out about all the robberies and murders he could remember, and then deftly got from him the statement that his master had gone to bed, leaving up only himself, the bar-maid, and his wife. Presently the doctor looked at his watch, and said it would soon be time for us to go. 'I think you had better get our bill, Sandy,' I said, for by this time I was quite on familiar terms with him, and he with me. 'You need not be in a hurry; let us have it in about a quarter of an hour,' added Toole,

somewhat mysteriously. 'We are not quite ready to go yet.'

"'Vary weel, and thank ye,' he said, at the same time making us a bow which was quite a study of manner, combining independence and servility. He was a fine old fellow, straight as a poplar, but with a face full of wrinkles, and a characteristic gait that some people would call a mannerism.

"The moment he left the room each of us seized a piece of plate until we had cleared up every bit of silver in the room. We noted the exact places from which we took every piece; then we opened the window. It was a very dark night, but we had noticed that close by the window there were some thick shrubs. We put out the gas, but left alight two candles on the table, so that we could see from our hiding-place what Sandy's face would look like when it should dawn upon him that we were a pack of thieves—perhaps part of the gang of swell-mobsmen who had become the terror of the district.

"I shall never forget the bewildered expression of the poor fellow's face as he stared at the empty room. Amazement gave place to fear, and fear to indignation, when he discovered that the silver had been carried off.

"'Great heevens!' he exclaimed. 'Thieves! berglers! robbers! An' if the rogues hae nae carried off

the plate and gan awa' wi'out payin' their score into the bargain, my name is nae Sandy Blake!'

"He rushed to the open window and peered wildly out into the darkness.

"'The scoundrels were just fooling me, like any softy.'

"Then he began to shout 'Thieves!' and 'Murder!' and ran off, as we hoped and expected he would, to alarm the house. We all crept back to the room, closed the window, drew down the blind, relighted the gas and our cigars, put each piece of silver back into its proper place, and sat down to wait for our bill. We could hear Sandy, at the top of his voice, telling the story of the robbery; and in a few minutes we heard evidently the entire household coming pell-mell to the dining-room. Then our door was flung open; but the crowd, instead of rushing in upon us, suddenly paused *en masse*, and Sandy exclaimed, 'Great God! Weel, weel! Hae I just gane clean daft?'

"'Come awa', drunken foo', come awa'!' exclaimed the landlord, pulling Sandy and the rest back into the passage and shutting the door; but we could hear how both master and wife abused poor Sandy, who did nothing but call upon his Maker and declare, if he had to die that minute, when he went into the room it was empty of both guests and silver. He was told

to go to bed and sleep off his drunk, and thank his stars that his long service saved him from instant dismissal.

"We rang the bell. The landlord himself answered it. We asked for an explanation of the hubbub. It was nothing, he said, only that his man had got drunk and made a fool of himself. Was that all? we asked. Well, yes, except that he was very sorry to have so disturbed us. To have all the house burst in upon us, we said, was such a strange proceeding, that we begged he would explain it. He said he did not like to do so. It was the first time Sandy had ever been known to get so drunk as to lose his senses, and all he could do was to express his regret that his servant had made a fool of himself; but he would not insult his guests by telling them how great an ass the fellow was. We coaxed him, however, to explain the entire business; and at last, with many apologies, he told us how the drunken fool had mistaken us for a pack of thieves, and swore we had run off without paying our bill and taken the plate with us. We humoured the landlord for a time, and when he was at last in a genial temper we told him the true story, and he enjoyed the joke as well as any of us. Then we had him send for Sandy, who was so glad to discover that he had not lost his wits that a couple of sovereigns left him, at our departure, just as happy and contented a man as he was

before making the acquaintance of 'a parcel of actors,' who are still regarded in some remote corners of Great Britain as the 'rogues and vagabonds' they are proclaimed in our ancient statute books."

V.

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE PLAY.

The Vividness of first Impressions—New York Hotels—On the Elevated Road with "Charlie" — Trotting-horses — Audiences on both sides of the Atlantic—"A man knows best what he can do"—"Americanisms," so called—A satirical Sketch, entitled "Bitten by a Dog"—Louis and the Duke of Stratford-on-Avon—Macready and the Forrest Riots.

I.

"A JOURNALIST from Chicago is anxious to know your opinion of New York, and to have some suggestions about the state of your feelings concerning your first appearance in America," I said; "and if you will talk to him, I have undertaken to collaborate with him in writing the interview, so that I may revise and adopt it for our book of impressions."

"Is he here?"

"Yes, he has come over a thousand miles to see you, and his chief is an old friend of mine, the proprietor of the *Daily News*."

"I am quite willing," he said, "if you think my impressions are of sufficient importance to record, after only a week of New York."

"First impressions of a new country are always the most vivid. I believe in first impressions, at all events, in your case. It is another matter when one comes to treat them as a basis for philosophical argument. Your friend, Mr. Matthew Arnold, was not backward in discussing the American people, their cities, their institutions, their manners and customs, before he had crossed the Atlantic at all."

"Well, let us talk to Chicago then, if you wish it."

"So far, are you satisfied with your reception in this country?"

"More than satisfied; I am delighted, I might say amazed. It is not only the press and the public who have shown me so much attention, but I have received many courtesies privately, — some from American friends whom I have met in London, some from gentlemen whom I have never seen."

"What is your general impression of New York, its theatres, hotels, streets, and its social life?"

"I think Wallack's, or the Star, as it is called, one of the most admirable theatres I have ever seen, so far as the auditorium is concerned, and, in some respects, as to the stage. The appointments behind the foot-

lights are rather primitive; but, as a whole, it is a fine house."

"Is it as good as your own in London?"

"Better, in many respects. As for the hotels, they are on a far larger scale, and seem more complete in their arrangements than ours. The Brevoort is, I am told, more like an English house than any other in the city. The genial proprietor evidently desires to make his guests think so. Portraits of Queen Victoria, the late Prince Consort, and pictorial reminiscences of the old country meet you at every turn. As for social life in New York, what I have seen of it is very much like social life in London—a little different in its forms and ceremonies, or, I might say, in the absence of ceremony—and with this exception, that there does not appear to be what you would call an idle class here, —a class of gentlemen who have little else to do but to be amused and have what you call 'a good time.' Everybody seems to be engaged in business of some kind or another."

"Is this your first visit to America?"

"Yes; though I seem to have known it for a long time. American friends in London have for years been telling me interesting things about your country. I had heard of the elevated road, Brooklyn Bridge, and the splendid harbour of New York. But they are all quite different to what I had imagined

them. The elevated railway is a marvellous piece of work. I rode down-town upon the Sixth Avenue line yesterday. They compelled me to carry my dog Charlie; and I notice, by the way, a remarkable absence of dogs in the streets. You see them everywhere, you know, in London. Charlie, an old friend of mine, attracted great attention on the cars."

"More than you did?"

"Oh, yes; much more. He's a well-bred little fellow, and one gentleman, who took a great interest in him, tried to open negotiations to buy him from me. Poor Charlie!—he is getting old and blind, though he looks sprightly enough. He has travelled with me in Europe and Africa, and now in America—some day we hope to see Asia together."

"Does he go with you to the theatre?"

"Always; and he knows the pieces I play. I suppose he knows them by the colour of the clothes I wear. During some plays he sniffs about all night—during the long ones he settles quietly down. When 'Hamlet' is played he is particularly sedate. He hates the 'Lyons Mail,' because there is shooting in it. When the murder-scene comes he hides away in the furthermost corner he can find."

"You are fond of animals?"

"Yes, very; and the most characteristic thing I

believe I have yet seen in America is your trotting-horse. I have been twice upon the track beyond the park; it is a wonderful sight."

"Have you no trotting-horses in England?"

"Nothing like yours, and no light vehicles such as yours. I could only think of the old chariot races as I watched the teams of magnificent trotters that rushed by me like the wind. I hear you have a fine race-course at Chicago. Our friend Hatton told me long ago about seeing the famous Maud S. make her great time there."

"Oh, yes. I remember how astonished he was. Maud S. and our fire-engine service captured his fancy. He described the racing in 'To-day in America.' You are coming to Chicago?"

"Yes. I am informed that I shall strike quite a different civilization in your city to that of New York, that public life with you is even more ardent than it is in the Empire city, and that the spirit of your commerce is more energetic. I can hardly understand that; but I long to see your wonderful new streets and your city boundaries that daily push their way into the prairie. John McCullough, I remember, once gave me a startling description of Chicago."

"I see that Mr. Sala, in the *Illustrated London News*, warns you to expect our press to attack you. Is Mr. Sala a friend of yours?"

"Yes; and a dear friend, and a very remarkable man. But we are wandering a little from the subject you came to talk about."

"Not much. May I ask if you have any nervousness as to your first appearance?"

"Yes, the natural nervousness that is part of an actor's first appearances everywhere. I cannot think that the taste for the drama is any different in New York and Chicago from Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, or London, in my own country."

"Very much is expected of you. It would be hardly possible for you to realize the exaggerated ideas of some people. If you were a god you could not satisfy their expectations."

"Nor, if I were a demon, could I achieve the attitudes and poses of my caricaturists. Between the two there is hope."

"You feel that it is a great ordeal anyway?"

"Yes."

"Some of your methods are new, more particularly as to Shakespearian productions?"

"I believe so. In my early days I had little opportunity to see other actors play Shakespeare, except on the stage where I acted with them, and then I was so occupied with my own work that I had little time to observe theirs. I had consequently to think for my-

self. It does not follow, of course, that I have always done the right thing, but my principle has been to go straight to the author. I have not taken up the methods of other actors, nor modelled my work on this or that tradition. A man knows best what he can do, and it seems to me just as absurd for one actor to imitate another—to recite this speech, or impersonate that action, as he has seen some other actor recite or impersonate—as it would be for a writer to print a historical incident just as some other had done, or for a modern novelist to write his stories on the lines of Fielding, Richardson, or Thackeray, without giving play to his own talents, or reins to his own imagination and conception of character."

"I will not weary you by going over the old ground concerning your alleged mannerisms; but I see that a New York paper has already taken you to task for jesting about the Pilgrim fathers. Did you notice that?"

"Oh, yes; you mean as to the Pilgrim mothers. I had no intention to jest about Plymouth rock. I only repeated a story told me by an American friend, the point of which was that the austerity of the Pilgrim fathers must have made them trying persons for the Pilgrim mothers. A very harmless bit of fun. One of my interviewers makes me speak of 'Americanisms' too. The word should have been 'mannerisms.' In

regard to the so-called Americanisms of American actors, all I have heard in that way have fallen from the lips of Raymond and Florence, just as you would hear Cockneyisms from our humorous comedians, Toole and Brough. The accent of your great actors does not strike me as different to our own; though a reporter on board the *Britannic*, last Sunday, told me he had understood I had a very strange accent, and was surprised to find that I spoke English as well as he did."

II.

The night before Irving's first appearance at the Star Theatre was spent at a quiet little supper given to a few private friends, at the Manhattan Club. The conversation turned chiefly upon English actors.

"I was once at a dinner of a Theatrical Fund, over which a famous old actor presided," said Irving. "His proposal of the first toast of the evening was a pathetic incident. His mind was wandering back to his early days. After alluding to the loyalty of all classes of Englishmen, and of actors in particular, he raised his glass and said, 'Gentlemen, I beg to give you the health of his Majesty King George the Third!'"

Somebody suggested that the ocean trip had done Irving a great deal of good.

"It was the most perfect rest I ever remember to have had," he said; "nothing to do, nothing to think of, no letters to answer—none to receive, for that matter; nothing to do but to rest. I took plenty of exercise, also, on deck. I must have walked many miles a day."

Later in the evening, over a last cigar, he said to me, "But I did a little writing on board the *Britannic*. I think it will amuse you. Watson asked me to send him something for the Christmas number of his newspaper,—an anecdote, or sketch of some kind. Shortly before I left Liverpool there appeared in the journals a paragraph to the effect that I had been bitten by a dog at some very aristocratic house. It occurred to me on the *Britannic* that this would make a good little story. You were telling me last night about my estate and palace on the Thames, and yet I don't suppose any man leads a quieter life than I do. I call my story 'Bitten by a Dog.'"

He read as follows, and, like most humourists, was tickled with his own fun, laughing now and then with real enjoyment at the suggestiveness of his satirical references to newspaper gossips, who, not knowing him personally, or being in any way acquainted with his habits, undertake to describe his inner life:—

We regret to hear that Mr. Henry Irving, while on a visit near ——, was severely bitten by a favourite dog, belonging to his

host. He bled profusely, but we sincerely hope that he will not seriously suffer from this occurrence.—*Newspaper Paragraph.*

"The circumstance thus recorded was somewhat novel to me, and having received several telegrams and letters of condolence upon my sad misfortune, I thought I would attempt, during my leisure upon the good ship *Britannic*, to tell this little story of 'The Bite of a Dog,' with a veracity equalling that of the inventor of the above-quoted paragraph.

"Seated in one of the suite of rooms which I invariably occupy in the hotels of the United Kingdom during my provincial tours—which have become alike the wonder and amazement of the entire dramatic profession—I was gazing into one of the many mirrors before which it is my regular habit to study grace of pose and poetry of expression. I was surrounded by the secretaries without whom I never travel; some telegraphing to the four corners of the globe the astounding success and enormous profit which accompany all my undertakings; others translating some of those essays on dramatic art which have done so much to regenerate the British drama; others copying in manifold certain not uncomplimentary criticisms of my own composition upon the most subtle and sublime of my impersonations; for, with Garrick, I agree that the actor should ever embrace the opportunity of becoming the critic of his own performances.

"In the midst of this multitudinous work a messenger was announced from the Duke of Stratford-upon-Avon. With a thrill of pleasure I sprang to my feet, and, greeting the messenger with a fascinating smile, begged him to be seated. Then throwing myself with a careless ease upon the velvet-pile sofa which adorned my room (a present from one of my admirers, and which I always carry with me, as I do my many mirrors), I crossed my graceful right over my still more graceful left leg, broke the duke's seal, and perused his letter.

"It was an invitation to sojourn from Saturday to Monday at the duke's feudal home, some fifteen miles from the town I was then appearing in. Throughout my life it has been my practice to solicit the favour and patronage of the great; for it is my firm belief that, to elevate one's art, one should mix as much as possible with the nobility and gentry.

> 'To grovel to the great is no disgrace,
> For nothing humble can be out of place.'

"This social opportunity was not to be lost; hesitation there was none; the invitation was accepted.

"On the night of my visit to his Grace, the theatre was crammed from floor to ceiling with an audience attracted by that cold curiosity which characterizes the public with regard to my performances. The play was

'Louis XI.,' and the difficult feat which I had to accomplish was to catch a train after the performance, in order to present myself at the mansion of my noble host in time to participate in the ducal supper.

"Throughout the play I laboured with all heart and earnestness to cut short the performance by every means in my power. I was determined to sleep under the roof of the Stratford-upon-Avons that night, come what would.

"The curtain fell only five minutes before the time of the train starting; so, throwing on my overcoat of sable furs (a handsome adjunct to my American expedition), and, still attired as King Louis,—for I had no time to change my costume,—I rushed into the brougham, ready at the stage door, and, followed by my valet, drove frantically to the station.

"I was thrust immediately through the open door of the nearest compartment—the door was locked—the whistle shrieked—away sped the train—and, panting and breathless, I was left to my meditations.

"'Ah! horror! most dreadful thought; too dreadful to relate! I have left the theatre without my teeth, —my beautiful teeth!'

"In order to heighten the realism of my impersonation when I first acted Louis, I had several teeth extracted by one of our most eminent dentists, who has offered, as an advertisement, to take out any others in the like

liberal manner.[1] In my insane hurry to catch the train I had left my teeth in a glass on my dressing-room table.

"But regrets are useless; the train has stopped, and I enter the duke's chariot, in waiting at the station, and, through the broad woodlands, soon reach the duke's home.

"I alight from the ancestral coach and enter the ancestral hall, in which a cheerful fire is blazing upon the ancestral hearth.

"Suddenly I find myself in the presence of my host, surrounded by many scions of the nobility of 'England, Home, and Beauty.' The oddness of my position (dressed as I was, and minus my teeth), and the natural inferiority which I always feel when in the presence of the real aristocrat, robbed me for the moment of my self-possession, and I unconsciously permitted two of the gentlemen in powder to divest me of my overcoat,

[1] This story was reprinted in several American papers. A dentist of some note in a leading city, not appreciating its satire, wrote a long letter to Mr. Irving, offering to make him a new set of teeth, on a patented system of his own, which had given great pleasure to a number of eminent American ladies and gentlemen. He enclosed a list of his clients, and the price of their teeth. As an inducement for Irving to accept his proposals, he quoted "very moderate terms," on condition that "if satisfactory" he should "have the use of his name" in public, thus "acting up to the liberal principles of the English practitioner."

and there I stood revealed as that wicked monarch Louis XI.

"Now, this character I have long had an idea of abandoning, for in art the eye must be pleased; and, though it is commendable to follow nature and truth, yet if this can only be accomplished at the cost of one's personal appearance, nature and truth should certainly give way. But to resume.

"Surprise at my aspect was in every face. There was a painful pause, and then a burst of laughter.

"'What is it?' whispered one.

"'Who is it?' whispered another.

"'Irving,' said a third.

"'Who's Irving?' asked a fourth.

"'What! don't you know?—the actor—Irving, the actor—I've seen him at the Gaiety!'

"I was profoundly relieved by the duke coming to my rescue and graciously suggesting that I might, before supper, wish to see my room. I thanked his Grace with the dignity with which nature has endowed me, and strode like Marshal Stalk across the marble vestibule, when a fierce sanguinary Blenheim spaniel flew from the lap of a dowager duchess, and, with a terrific howl, buried its fangs in the calf of my beautiful left leg.

"Consternation and pallor were in every countenance; the dowager ran to seize her pet; but, to the dismay of

all, the dog's hold would not relax. They pulled and pulled again, and 'Fido' howled at every pull. His teeth, unlike mine, would not be extracted.

"There was a pause of painful silence. Mingled fear and compassion sat on every brow. The dowager was on the point of swooning in the arms of the duke, when the dignity and distinction which sometimes support me in emergencies came to my aid. Turning to the gentle assembly, with a seraphic smile upon my noble features, I said, as well as my articulation would permit,—

"'Be not alarmed, fair ladies; be not alarmed! The dog has not torn my leg; he has only torn my padding.'"

III.

"GOOD-NIGHT," I said, "and good luck! When next we say good-night, New York will have pronounced its verdict."

"I don't believe in luck," he answered. "It will be all right. But it seems strange, after all our talks of America, that to-morrow night I am to act here in New York. How everything comes to an end! Next year at this time, all being well, we shall be looking back upon the whole tour, recalling incidents of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Baltimore, Washington; and I dare say it will appear very much like a dream. It was not far from this hotel where

Macready found refuge from the mob, in a friend's house. During this week several persons who were present have mentioned the riots to me, and they all blame Forrest. I told them Forrest had some reason to believe that Macready had set Forster against him, which, no doubt, helped to embitter Forrest's mind. They say, however, that Forrest's hatred of English actors amounted to something like a mania. He must have been a remarkable and great actor in many parts." [2]

[2] The misunderstanding between Forrest and Macready has been canvassed and discussed in most histories of the modern stage. Forrest believed that his ill-success in London was the result of a plot on the part of Macready to write him down. So fixed in his mind was this view of his failure, that brooding over it evidently unmanned him. He went to the Edinburgh Theatre (shortly before he left England for America) and hissed Macready in Hamlet. In a letter to the *Pennsylvanian*, Nov. 22, 1848, he wrote:—

"On the occasion alluded to, Mr. Macready introduced a fancy dance into his performance of Hamlet, which I designated as a *pas de mouchoir*, and which I hissed, for I thought it a desecration of the scene; and the audience thought so, too; for, a few nights afterwards, when Mr. Macready repeated the part of Hamlet with the same 'tomfoolery,' the intelligent audience greeted it with a universal hiss.

"Mr. Macready is stated to have said last night that he 'had never entertained towards me a feeling of unkindness.' I unhesitatingly pronounce this to be a wilful and unblushing falsehood. I most solemnly aver, and do believe, that Mr. Macready, instigated by his narrow, envious mind and selfish fears, did secretly—not openly—suborn several writers for the

Irving little thought that in the reminiscences of a past, which had yet to come, would be an incident that

English press to write me down. Among them was one Forster, a 'toady' of the eminent tragedian,—one who is ever ready to do his dirty work; and this Forster, at the bidding of his patron, attacked me in print, even before I had appeared upon the London boards, and continued to abuse me at every opportunity afterwards.

"I assert also, and solemnly believe, that Mr. Macready connived, when his friends went to the theatre in London, to hiss me, and did hiss me, with the purpose of driving me from the stage; and all this happened many months before the affair at Edinburgh, to which Mr. Macready refers, and in relation to which he jesuitically remarked, that 'until that act he never entertained towards me a feeling of unkindness.'"

It is worth while adding in this place the following interesting account of the fatal riot, which is extracted from Barrett's "Life of Edwin Forrest," published by Jas. R. Osgood and Co., in 1881:—

"On the 7th of May, 1848, Macready began an engagement at the Astor Place Opera House, under the management of J. H. Hackett. The theatre was packed by his enemies, and he was hooted from the stage. He prepared to return to his own country, but was persuaded by his friends to remain, in order that he might see how far the public endorsed the opposition against him. An invitation to this effect, signed by many of the best citizens of New York, was taken as a defiance by the admirers of Forrest, who prepared to meet the issue. Forrest was playing at the Broadway Theatre, and on the 16th of May, Macready, at the Astor Place house, was announced to reappear as Macbeth. The authorities had been called to the aid of the signers of the call, and when the doors were opened the theatre was instantly filled by a crowd of persons favourable to the actor, while the great mass of his enemies were excluded. These filled the street,

should inseparably link his own name with the Forrest-Macready riots.

however, while the few who did gain admission showed their opposition upon the appearance of Macready. At the first attempt the assailants were confronted by a body of Macready's friends within the theatre too powerful to be resisted; but the majority without added a threatening reinforcement when the decisive moment for violence should arrive.

"The play was stopped. Macready, hustled from the back door in the cloak of a friend, barely escaped with his life, and the mimic tragedy within doors gave way to the approaching real tragedy without. The theatre was attacked on all sides by the mob, and its destruction seemed inevitable. Troops were called out; the order was given to disperse. The angry crowd only hooted a reply of derision. The Riot Act was read amid the yells and oaths of the blood-seeking rabble; stones and missiles were hurled at the Seventh Regiment; the police gave way before the overpowering numbers of the mob, and at last, the soldiers, sore pressed, wounded, and nearly demoralized by the assaults which they were not allowed to repulse, were called upon to fire. They responded with blank cartridges, which only increased the fury of the crowd. A pause, and then the order was given to load with balls. A volley was fired: the cries were hushed; the smoke cleared away; the ground was red with the blood of some thirty unfortunate men; the rioters vanished into the darkness before that hail of wrath, and the stain of blood was upon that quarrel which began far away in Old England and ended so tragically here."

VI.

THE BELLS.

A stormy Night in New York—Ticket Speculators at work—A first-night Audience—Mathias received with Enthusiasm—Behind the Scenes—Lighting the Stage—Returning Thanks—Criticism of the Crowd—John Gilbert's Opinion—Actor and Audience—English Play-goers and Londoners — Laughter and Applause — An artistic Triumph.

I.

Torrents of rain without, and a great fashionable crowd within the Star Theatre, inaugurated Irving's first appearance on the American stage.

The electric lights, away up among the wet clouds that emptied themselves over Union Square, flashed coldly on untended roadways, which vehicles of all kinds churned into rivers of mud. The architectural surroundings of the place, and the well-appointed carriages that dashed along to the Star Theatre and the opera, were singularly out of keeping with the broken streets and the everlasting telegraph poles of the American continent.

It was a night on which London would have hesitated to turn out of its comfortable homes to greet even the most illustrious stranger; for the rain was tropical in its density. It splashed on the pavements in great drops, or, taken hold of by the wind, came at you in sheets of water. Carriage-horses were protected with "rubber-cloths," and the people who stepped out of the cars at the top of Broadway, or were driven to the door of the theatre in the public stages, were enveloped in "water-proofs." Nevertheless, the moment they alighted they were mobbed by a band of ticket speculators, who followed or preceded them into the broad vestibule of the theatre, hawking seats even under the box-office windows. In appearance these energetic dealers were the counterpart of the betting men you may see on any English race-course,—the same in manner, and almost in voice. They were warmly and well clad, had satchels strapped to their shoulders; but, instead of shouting, "Two to one, bar one!" "I'll bet on the field!" and other similar invitations to do business, they announced, in hoarse tones, "I have seats in the front row!" "Orchestra seats, third row!" "I have the best seats in the orchestra!" These New York speculators held in one hand a thick bundle of notes, and a packet of tickets in the other. They had change ready for any note you might offer them, and their tickets were fre-

quently what they represented them to be, "for the choicest locations."

For some time a notable crowd of persons, distinguished in New York society, pushed their way to seats which they had already secured, many of them at a premium of one hundred per cent. beyond the box-office rates.[1] A large number of persons waited in the vestibule until the curtain should go up, in the hope that the speculators would, for a moderate consideration, relax their grip on "choice seats." Many

[1] Among the audience (says the *Tribune*) were Miss Ellen Terry herself, accompanied by an elderly gentleman, with gray hair, who to some was known to be Felix Moscheles, Mendelssohn's godson, with his wife, and a young man of boyish appearance, known to many as the son of Lord Coleridge. In the other boxes were W. H. Vanderbilt, Chauncey M. Depew, Judge Brady, Augustus Schell, Algernon S. Sullivan, John H. Starin and Mrs. Starin, Howard Carroll and Mrs. Carroll, Madame Nilsson, Dr. Doremus and Mrs. Doremus, Mrs. Lester Wallack and Mrs. Arthur Wallack, Mr. and Mrs. William Bond, Mr. and Mrs. John Foord, Mrs. Charles Leland, Henry Rosener and Mrs. Rosener, and Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Moss. Among other well-known faces in the audience were noticed those of ex-Judge Horace Russell, General Horace Porter, Colonel and Mrs. Tobias, of Philadelphia; General Winslow, Dr. Fordyce Barker, George J. Gould, John Gilbert, Rafael Joseffy, Dr. Robert Laird Collier, of Chicago; Oscar Meyer and Mrs. Meyer, Mrs. John T. Raymond, Harry Edwards, Daniel Bixby, Charles Dudley Warner, John H. Bird, Mrs. John Nesbitt, Miss Jeffrey Lewis, Laurence Hutton, Mr. E. A. Buck, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, Colonel Knox, ex-Governor Dorsheimer, William Winter, and Dr. Macdonald.

tickets were sold, however, in the street and in the vestibule of the theatre for sums varying from five to ten dollars. Later in the evening, during the first and second acts of the play, the speculators parted with the balance of their property at box-office rates, which they readily obtained.

The entire floor of an American theatre is devoted to stall seats. Ladies and gentlemen who occupied the back seats had to submit to constant arrivals all through the first and second acts. The doors at the Star Theatre open right upon the audience. They were swinging backwards and forwards during the first half-hour of the piece. It is a universal habit in America not to be seated at the time announced for the curtain to go up. Add to this the obstruction of the ticket speculators and the premium they offer to late comers. Supplement these disturbing elements with a wet night; the natural annoyance of individuals who have paid large premiums for their seats; the prejudice against Irving which had been persistently promoted by his few but active enemies; and you will understand the severity of the ordeal of this first appearance in the United States.

II.

A ROUND of applause greeted the rise of the curtain upon the first scene of "The Bells." The audience

thus testified their desire to be kindly; but, as the first part of the story was told, there was a certain impatience even in their recognition of the artistic simplicity of the scene. "The Bells" opens more like a novel than a play, and yet the suggestiveness of the narrative at the table, as the topers chat and drink, is singularly dramatic. On this first night the play seemed to drag, and the audience were on the tiptoe of expectation. Those who were comfortably seated were anxious for the appearance of Irving; those who poured in to fill vacant seats at the back, and the hundreds who pushed in to stand behind them, created an uncomfortable sensation of disquiet. Had the Star been a London theatre, the patience of the people who were seated would have been so seriously taxed that they would hardly have permitted the play to proceed until order had been secured in all parts of the house.

At last the door of the burgomaster's home-like inn is flung open, and Irving stands there in his snow-sprinkled furs, his right hand raised above his head in the action of greeting his family, his left hand grasping his whip. His entrance was never more natural, never more picturesque. The audience hardly heard his opening words,—"It's I!" They greeted him with thunders of applause, and shouts of welcome. He presently stepped forward from the door. Those

who knew him would not fail to detect an effort to control his emotions, when he bowed his acknowledgments of a greeting as spontaneous as it was hearty. I had seen him in his dressing-room only a short time before. He was anxious, but firm as a rock; not in doubt of his own powers, but impressed, as any man might be, under similar circumstances, with the knowledge of how high the expectations of the people had been raised; how great the task of even approaching the standard of their excited hopes.

And now that the audience, touched by the artistic novelty of his appearance, and moved by their sentiments of hospitality, had given vent to their feelings, they settled down to allow the actor, of whose methods they had heard so much, to conquer their favourable opinion if he could. Despite the prejudices of some, and the annoyance of those who had been victimized by the speculators, auditors were willing to be captured,—nay, were desirous, if they could honestly do so, to endorse the verdict of their cousins of England, as to the place which Henry Irving holds in dramatic art.

"The Bells" is a weird play. Its lines are simple; it never halts. Mathias is an inn-keeper. He murders his guest, a Polish Jew, murders him on the highway for his gold, and is for ever haunted by his crime. The jangle of the sleigh-bells, as the Jew's horse

gallops away after its master's death, is continually in the assassin's ears. Their sad music trickles through the story like the ripple of a rising stream through stubble-fields in autumn. It sweeps over the dramatic narrative like the sighing of the wind in "chill October." Remorse takes possession of the criminal; he dreams he is being tried for his life.

This scene affords special opportunities for illustrating Irving's dramatic magnetism. The judicial court of his dreamland forces him to submit to the operations of a mesmerist. Under this influence he makes confession of his crime by re-enacting it. Nothing more weirdly suggestive can be imagined. Before an audience as breathless as the court, the actor went through the pantomime of stopping the Jew's horse, cutting down the Jew with an axe, plundering the body and thrusting it into a limekiln. Then, convicted and condemned, the murderer dies under the violent shock to his nerves of this retributive force of imagination,—dies while the church-bells are ringing for his daughter's marriage,—his last agonizing words, "Take the rope from my throat!"

Only a daring artist would undertake such a part; only a great one could succeed in it. Most of the second and last acts is a monologue; and, in a country like America, which is accustomed to rapidity of

thought and action, Irving was courageous in risking the result of so serious a strain upon the mind of a highly strung audience. The experiment, however, was entirely a triumph, notwithstanding the previously-mentioned discomforts attending an over-crowded house, and the rain that stormed without.

III.

The curtain having fallen on the first act, Irving received the honour of a triple call, after which I went to his room, and found him reading some of the numerous cables and telegrams from home and from several distant American and Canadian cities, wishing him success.

"How kind everybody is!" he exclaimed, as he handed me a bundle of despatches. "You should have seen the hundreds of telegrams and letters that were sent to me on board the steamer as I was leaving Liverpool!"

"You are pleased?"

"More than pleased," he said "What an audience! I never played to a more sympathetic lot of people in my life. They respond to every movement and point of the scene with a marvellous promptitude."

"You still feel that you are among friends?"

"I do, indeed."

"I believe you played that first act to-night better than ever you played it in London."

"Do you think so? 'Art is long and life is fleeting.'"

There was in the atmosphere behind the footlights something of the electricity of a first night at the Lyceum,—no fuss, but a suppression of feeling, a kind of setting of the teeth and a girding up of the loins. The fine "property" horse of the vision scene, covered with snow that would not melt, had been dragged to the rear, and the stage was being set for the trial scene. Mr. Frank Tyars had donned his ermine as the judge, the mesmerist was ready at the wing, the last nail was being driven into the judicial bench. The local stage-hands and supers were at last evidently impressed with the importance of attention to some little matter of detail which they had daily tried to shirk at rehearsal. There had even been difficulties, on the stage and off, in regard to the regulation of the lights. Prominent gas-brackets had been removed from the auditorium, but the lowering of the lights down nearly to darkness for the last act of "The Bells" had been resisted. Later, however, Mr. Loveday found his New York collaborators in this respect willing allies; and within the first week the man who had charge of the calcium lights said, "I have seen them all; every one of the great actors and stage-

managers; and they don't begin to know as much about lighting the stage as this Mr. Henry Irving has forgotten!"

A breathless silence testified to the impressiveness of the last act. You might almost have fancied you heard, in the car-bells of the streets, faint echoes of the sleigh-bells that jangled in the ears of Mathias. I remember the first night of "The Bells" at the Lyceum. The stillness in this New York house, as Mathias died of imaginary strangulation, reminded me of the London theatre on that occasion. The sensation in the two houses was the same. Nobody moved until the thud of the drop-curtain roller emphatically announced the end. Then the Star audience, as the Lyceum audience had done before them, gave vent to their enthusiasm.

Called and recalled, Irving appeared before the curtain. Then there was a cry of "Speech!" "Speech!" whereupon he said,—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—I believe it is a custom with you to allow an actor to thank you for the pleasure you have given to him; and I will avail myself of that custom now, to say that I thank you with all my heart and soul. It seems to me that the greatness of your welcome typifies the greatness of your nation. I thank you, and 'beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks.' Let me say that my comrades

are also deeply sensible of your kindness, and let me add that I hope you will give a warmer welcome, if such were possible, than I have received to my associate and friend, Miss Ellen Terry, who will have the honour of appearing before you to-morrow night. And, finally, if it be not a liberty, will you allow me to express the hope 'that our loves may increase even as our days do grow'?"

As the audience left the theatre, the opinions expressed accentuated the reality of the actor's success. "The things that have been said about his mannerisms are shameful;" "Why, he has no more mannerisms than Booth!" "I never was more agreeably surprised;" "He speaks like an educated American;" "And in the street looks like a Yale or Harvard professor;" "Never saw anything finer;" "Most awfully impressive scene, that last act;" "Stage magnetism in the highest degree;" "Guess he is safe for the biggest run of popularity of any actor or any man who has ever come to this country;" "Oh, he is immense!" "Did you hear Tony Pastor say it's the intensest acting he's ever seen,—that's a compliment, from what you may call a low comedian;" "Madame Nilsson,—wasn't she delighted?" "Yes, she wouldn't sing to-night; would have a box to come and see Irving." These were some of the remarks one caught as the audience left the theatre; and the most practical

criticism is often heard as one leaves a theatre among the crowd.

Coming upon a group of critics and others, I learn that the critic of *The Telegram* says, "Irving is, indeed, a revelation!" while Mr. Oakey Hall, of *Truth*, thanks God he has lived to see such an actor. Several members of the Press Club join in the chorus of praise. Buck and Fiske, of *The Spirit of the Times*, smile quietly, as much as to say, "We told you so." The famous critic of the *Tribune* goes out, saying, "Yes, it is great; there is no denying it." Mr. Wallack, who, too ill to walk, had been carried to his box, expresses his hearty admiration of the actor whom for so many years he had longed to see; and Mr. Gilbert,[2] the veteran comedian and stage-manager at Wallack's, is

[2] "Twelve Americans," a graphic series of biographical sketches, by Howard Carroll, devotes some interesting pages to the story of John Gilbert's life and work. For upwards of fifty years an actor, this veteran of the American stage was born on the 27th of February, 1810, at Boston, in a house "adjoining that in which Miss Cushman, the greatest of American actresses first saw the light." His parents were in a good position, and, while they were not bigots, they did not altogether hold the theatrical profession as a highly reputable one. Young Gilbert was head of his class in declamation at the Boston High School. When he left school he was sent into a commercial house with a view to his becoming a dry-goods merchant. He disliked business, and after reciting Jaffer, in "Venice Preserved," to the manager of the Tremont Theatre, he was granted an appearance. After opening the store where he was engaged he read with delight in the newspaper, that in the evening "a young

"impressed beyond expression, especially with the business of counting the dowry."

There is a rush of critics, reporters, correspondents, "down-town" to chronicle the night's success. One or two writers, whose eccentricities give a commercial value to their work, go away to maintain their lively reputations; but, on the whole, it is evident that

gentleman of Boston" would make his *début* in the play of "Venice Preserved." He appeared and "did well," in spite of his uncle (who was his master) scowling at him in front. "O John! what have you done?" was the broken-hearted exclamation of his mother the next day. John had not dared to go to the store, and felt himself quite an outcast. He was forgiven, however, in due course, and made a second appearance as Sir Edward Mortimer, in "The Iron Chest." He was successful beyond his expectations, and as "a boy actor" was praised as a phenomenon. Later he joined the stock company, and was reduced to "speaking utility" parts. Though disliking the drudgery of his place, he grew up with his work, and with the physical capacity for leading business he showed that he had also the mental strength for it. He played with Macready and Charlotte Cushman at the Princess's Theatre, London. At the close of his engagement there he attended the leading English theatres to study actors and their methods. Thence he went to Paris to complete his studies. On his return to America he filled important engagements for some years at the old Park Theatre; then he went for a time to Boston, where he was a great favourite; and finally he joined the Wallacks, in New York, where he has familiarized the Empire city with the best interpretations of Sir Peter Teazle, old Dornton, old Hardy, Sir Anthony Absolute, Major Oakley, Master Walter, Hardcastle, Sir Harcourt Courtley, Adams, and other high-class comedy characters of the century. He is still to New York what the elder Farren was to London.

everybody, press men and public, is greatly pleased. Many American journals in distant States were represented at the theatre by their own critics and by correspondents. Long telegraphic despatches were wired to the leading cities of the Union; the Associated Press sent out special messages; the London journals were in evidence, and a new Anglo-French paper in Paris had commissioned its New York correspondent to cable some thousand or more words of Irving's opening night. Since the Forrest-Macready riot no theatrical event had created so general an interest as the first appearance of Irving in America.

IV.

Going behind the scenes after the play, I found a representative of the *Herald* already ensconced in Mr. Irving's dressing-room. He was pressing the actor for his views of the audience, and for some contrasts of his sensations under the influence of this audience and others before whom he had played in England. At first Irving seemed inclined to say no more than to express satisfaction at his success. But the *Herald* representative was a quiet, cultivated, and experienced journalist. Evidently a gentleman of education, a travelled man, and discreet, he led the

actor into the conversational direction he desired him to go, and the result was a pleasant and instructive interview :—

"When I first stepped into view of the audience, and saw and heard the great reception it gave me, I was filled with emotion. I felt that it was a great epoch in my life. The moment I faced the people I felt that we were friends. I knew that they wished to like me, and would go away, if I disappointed them, saying, 'Well, we wanted to like him ; but we couldn't.' Who could stand before such an audience, on such an occasion, and not be deeply moved? All I can say is, that it was a glorious reception, and typical of your great people."

"But as to the merits of the audience—theatre-goers will judge your acting—what is your opinion of them?"

"The audience was a fine one. Apart from the marks of intelligence, which could be read with the naked eye, it was a fine assembly. I never played before a more responsive or sympathetic audience. It did not miss a point. I could tell all through the play that every motion I made was being closely watched; that every look, gesture, and tone was carefully observed. It is stimulating to an actor to feel that he has won his audience."

"You felt confident that you had made an impres-

sion upon the audience, and that there was no flattery in the applause?"

"After the first burst of welcome was over, yes. I had not been on the stage five minutes before I knew that I had control of my hearers, and that I could make every point in the play tell. Then the silence of the people—the greatest compliment that could be paid to one in such a play—was always succeeded by genuine applause at the end of the act!"

"Did you get such a reception when you appeared as Mathias first before a London audience?"

"Oh, no. Don't you see, I was comparatively little known then."

"Mr. Irving, an English newspaper a few days ago expressed a hope that you would be judged by your merits, independent of anything that had previously been said or written about you, and that Americans in this case would not slavishly echo English opinion.[3] Was there any trace of independence in the manner of the audience?"

"Yes, yes,—there was, certainly," said the actor, rising and pacing the room. "It is not presumption in me to say that I am sure I was judged solely on

[3] This statement and question were founded upon the *Standard's* message, previously referred to; but which Mr. Irving himself neither saw nor heard of until within a few days of the close of his New York engagement.

my merits, and that the audience went away pleased with me. There were times to-night when I could feel the sympathy of my hearers—actually feel it."

"The audience was quiet in the first act. The interest is worked up to the climax so smoothly and gradually that there was no opportunity for applause until the end?"

"There, now, you have found one of the differences between the judgment of my audience to-night and those I have played to in London. In the first part of the play the English audiences laughed a great deal; quite boisterously, in fact, at some of the comedy scenes. But the absence of this to-night, I think, was due to the fact that the people were straining to get the exact run of the play, and were labouring under anxiety—it is not presumption if I say so—to see me."

"Was there any other feature of this kind that you noticed?"

"Yes; when Christian yields to my demand for a promise that he will never leave the village while I am alive, I say, 'It was necessary!' This point has generally provoked laughter in England. To-night it evoked earnest applause. On the other hand, for the first time I heard the audience laugh at 'Now the dowry to be given to our dear son-in-law, in order that our dear son-in-law may love us.'"

"Are you willing to be judged as an actor by to-night's performance, Mr. Irving?"

"For that character, yes."

"Is Mathias not your greatest *rôle?*"

"My best? Well, now, that's hard to say. There is no ground for comparison,—Charles the First is so different; he is full of qualities that are foreign to Mathias. I cannot name a character in which I feel I am best. They afford opportunities for the display of different powers. I am fond of the part of Mathias, it is true."

"Did your company play up to the standard of their work in the Lyceum?"

"Well, you have not seen them all; you have not seen Miss Terry or Mr. Howe."

"But did those of the company who were in the cast to-night do as well as usual?"

"They were rather slower, but quite good. Of course every one was excited, more or less. There is only one strong part in the play, and that is mine. Mr. Terriss was excellent. Don't you think he is a fine fellow?"

Suiting the action to the word, Irving unconsciously dropped into a military attitude, stretched his hand out and threw back his head,—a perfect fac-simile of Mr. Terriss' impersonation of Christian.

"Is the scenery the same that was used in the Lyceum?"

"Exactly the same. You prompt me to mention a particular point, now. Did you notice how little the scenery had to do with the play? I have it so on purpose. Why, there is practically no scenery. I try to get as near truth as possible, as Caleb Plummer says. I have sometimes heard that I rely on scenery. So far I do: if it were the hovel of King Lear I would have a hovel, and if it were the palace of Cleopatra I would make it as gorgeous as the possibilities of art would allow."

"Do you look upon your reception to-night as a success?"

"In every way. One of your greatest actors told me that American audiences are proverbially cold on first nights. He was trying to save me from a possible disappointment. In addition to this, 'The Bells' is not a play for applause, but for earnest, sympathetic silence. Need I say that the demonstrations which burst forth on every occasion that good taste would allow, are the best evidences that to-night I have won an artistic triumph."

VII.

"RED LETTER DAYS."

Miss Ellen Terry's first appearance in New York—The Press on Charles and the Queen—A Professional *Matinée*—An audience of Actors to see Louis XI.—How they impressed the Actor, and what they thought of him—A visit to Henry Ward Beecher—At Church and at Home—Mrs. Beecher and Miss Terry—Reminiscences—Studies of Death, Physiological and Idealistic—Louis's Death and Hamlet's—A strange Story.

I.

New York received Miss Terry, on her first appearance before an American audience, as cordially as it had welcomed Irving. It was as Henrietta Maria that she spoke her first words on the stage of the New World.[1]

[1] In "Charles the First" Irving confirmed the good impression he had made. Miss Terry received a most cordial reception, and made so excellent an impression upon the audience, both by her charming personality and admirable acting, that long before the evening was over she had firmly established herself in the good graces of her new public, who more than once, at the fall of the curtain, invited her, with every enthusiastic mark of approbation, to come before the house to receive in person its acknowledgments and congratulations. Her success was unquestionable. In the second act the curtain fell on the conclu-

There is no more tenderly poetic play in the *répertoire* of the modern drama than "Charles the First." The story in Irving's hands is told with a truthful simplicity that belongs to the hightest form of theatrical art. All the leading critics recognized this. The effect of the well-known Hampton Court cloth was so perfect in its way, and so new to some of them, that it was regarded as a cut cloth, with "raking" and water-pieces. The *Tribune* interpreted the general opinion of the audience, when it said, "what most impressed them was Irving's extraordinary physical fitness to the accepted ideal of Charles Stuart, combined with the passionate earnestness and personal magnetism that enable him to create

sion of one of the grandest results that any actor has achieved in New York for years. A continued succession of plaudits came from all parts of the house. The performance was profoundly conceived, acted out with infinite care, elaborated with rare skill, and invested with naturalness that deserved all praise. Irving, in his finale, merited fully every word that has been written of his power, intensity, and dramatic excellence; and he was enthusiastically called before the curtain, in order that the audience might assure him of that verdict. Miss Terry made the impression of a charming actress. There was something very captivating in the sweetness of her manner, the grace of her movements, and the musical quality of her tones. In acting, her points were made with remarkable ease and naturalness. There was an entire absence of theatrical effect, there was a symplicity of style in everything she did, a directness of method and sincerity of feeling that, as we have said, was the simplicity of true art, and yet not the exaggeration of the simplicity of nature.—*New York Herald.*

and sustain a perfect illusion;" while it may be said to have just as happily expressed the views of another class in the words: "To the student Mr. Irving's Charles is especially significant, as indicative of the actor's method in applying what is termed 'natural' treatment to the poetic drama."

"Louis XI.," "The Merchant of Venice," "The Lyons Mail," and "The Belle's Stratagem," were the other pieces produced during the four weeks in New York. The theatre was crowded nightly, and on the Saturday *matinées*. The speculators found it easier to dispose of their tickets, as the weeks wore on, than even during the first five or six days of the engagement. Nothing damped the public ardour. The opera war between Mapleson and Abbey, as representatives of two great parties of wealthy art patrons, had no apparent influence on the receipts at the Star Theatre. One of the greatest nights of the month marked the first appearance of Patti at the Academy of Music. Inclement weather, abnormal charges for seats, strong counter-attractions at the other houses, including the two grand Italian Opera Companies, might have been expected to discount the financial success of any rival entertainment. They made no difference to Irving. He was the talk, not of New York, but of America; and after her appearance as Portia, Miss Ellen Terry was almost as much written about as he himself.

Unrivalled in the higher walks of comedy, Miss Terry is to the American public as new as Irving in the naturalness of her methods.

Shylock excited controversy, Louis inspired admiration, Dubosc and his virtuous double commanded respect, and the method of presenting the plays was a theme of praise and delight in and out of the press. Of Louis the *Sun* said, "Mr. Irving won his audience to him almost at once. It was impossible to withstand the intensity, the vivid picturesqueness, and imposing reality of his portrayal, and after each great scene of the play he was called again and again before the curtain by hearty and most demonstrative applause. It was a wonderful performance, and the impression that it left is one that can never be laid aside." The *Times* was struck with his appearance. "His make-up is as perfect in its kind as that of Charles the First, and nobody would imagine the actor to be the same as the actor in either of the other parts which he has presented. But the verisimilitude here goes much deeper than the make-up. There is the senile garrulity and the senile impatience of garrulity, the senile chuckle over successful strokes of business. And this character is deepened as the play advances. The occasional expressions of energy are spasmodic; and after each the patient relapses into a still more listless apathy, and this decay is progressive until the death-scene,

which is the strongest and most impressive piece of realism that Mr. Irving has yet given us." The *Herald* commended Shylock to the Shakespearian student, "as the best exposition of the character that can be seen on the stage;" while the *Tribune* said of Miss Terry, "Her simple manner, always large and adequate, with nothing puny or mincing about it, is one of the greatest beauties of the art which it so deftly conceals. Her embodiment of a woman's loveliness, such as in Portia should be at once stately and fascinating, and inspire at once respect and passion, was felicitous beyond the reach of descriptive phrases. Her delivery of the Mercy speech was one of the few perfectly modulated and entirely beautiful pieces of eloquence that will dwell for ever in memory. Her sweet and sparkling by-play in the 'business' about the ring and in her exit can only be called exquisite. Better comedy has not in our time been seen." [2]

[2] Miss Terry was born at Coventry, Feb. 27, 1848. Her parents were members of the theatrical profession. Her first appearances on the stage were in "The Winter's Tale" and "King John" (Mamillius and Arthur), during the Shakespearian revivals of Charles Kean, in 1858. As Prince Arthur she had repeated the success of her eldest sister Kate, who had made her first appearance in the part six years previously. Mr. Irving, during his conversations and speeches in this book of "Impressions," has referred to the stock companies which, at one time, were the provincial schools which supplied London with its principal actors. When Ellen Terry was a girl, the late Mr. Chute presided over the fortunes of two of the best

II.

At the written request of the leading actors and theatrical companies of New York, Irving gave a

stock companies in the country. He was the lessee of the Bristol and Bath theatres, and he played his Bristol company at Bath once or twice a week. Some twenty years ago I remember a stock company at the Bristol theatre, which included Marie Wilton, Miss Cleveland (Mrs. Arthur Stirling), Miss Mandelbert, Madge Robertson (Mrs. Kendall) and her mother, Arthur Stirling, George Rignold, William Rignold, Arthur Wood, Fosbroke, and the fathers, respectively, of Marie Wilton and Madge Robertson. At that time Kate Terry and Ellen Terry had left for London, Ellen having joined the Bristol company at the close of Charles Kean's management of the Princess's. She played Cupid to her sister Kate's Diana in Brough's extravaganza of "Endymion" at Bristol, in 1862. She made her *début* in London, March, 1863, as Gertrude, in the "Little Treasure." The critics of the time recognized in her art "an absence of conventionality and affectation," and they look back now to trace in her interpretations of "the buoyant spirits, kindly heart, and impulsive emotions" of Gertrude for the undoubted forecast of her present success, more particularly in those characters which give full play to the natural sympathetic and womanly spirit of her art. From March, 1863, till January, 1864, she played Hero, in "Much Ado About Nothing," Mary Meredith, in "The American Cousin," and other secondary parts. She married and left the stage while still a mere child, and was not yet twenty when she made her reappearance at the end of October, 1867, in "The Double Marriage," adapted from the French by Charles Reade for the New Queen's Theatre, London. She also played Mrs. Mildmay, in "Still Waters," and Katharine in the ordinary stage version of the "Taming of the Shrew," known as "Katharine and Petruchio." It was in this comedy, on the 26th of December,

"professional *matinée*" at the Star Theatre. The play was "Louis XI." It was the first time Irving had appeared before an audience of actors in any country. The house was packed from floor to ceiling. It was a singularly interesting and interested audience. No actor, proud of his profession, could have looked at it without a thrill of pleasure. Well-dressed, beaming with intelligence and intellectuality, it was on good

1867, that she and Mr. Irving first acted together. She left the theatre in January, 1868, and did not reappear on the London stage until 1874, when she succeeded Mrs. John Wood in the part of Phillippa Chester, in Charles Reade's "Wandering Heir," which was produced under the author's management at the Queen's Theatre. She afterwards joined Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft's company at the Prince of Wales's, and was the Portia to Mr. Coughlan's Shylock, in the ambitious production of "The Merchant of Venice," which was to be a new departure in the history of the famous little house near Tottenham Court Road. Shakespeare did not prosper, however, at the Prince of Wales's, though his great comedy was daintily mounted, and Miss Terry's Portia was as sweet and gracious as the art of the actress could make that sweet and gracious heroine. From the Bancrofts, Miss Terry went to their rivals (Mr. Hare and the Kendalls), at the Court Theatre. The sterling natural qualities which some critics noted in her method when a child were abundantly apparent in her Olivia, a fresh, graceful, touching performance, of which *Punch* said, January 11, 1879, "If anything more intellectually conceived or more exquisitely wrought out than Miss Terry's Ophelia has been seen on the English stage in this generation, it has not been within *Punch's* memory." She closed her engagement at the Court Theatre on the offer of Mr. Irving to take the position of leading lady at the Lyceum Theatre, where she made her first appearance, De-

terms with itself, and it settled down in stalls, boxes, and dress circle with an air of pleasant expectation that was refreshing to contemplate.[3]

cember 30, 1878, and since which time she has shared with him the honours of a series of such successes as are unparalleled in the history of the stage. They include the longest runs ever known of "Hamlet," "The Merchant of Venice," "Romeo and Juliet," and "Much Ado About Nothing." This is not the place to do more than give these brief biographic notes of a brilliant career. But one is tempted to quote a singularly happy sketch of Miss Ellen Terry, which appeared, on the eve of her departure for America, in the *St. Stephen's Review*, July, 1883: "It is well for the stage that it possesses such a gift as Ellen Terry. The age is, on the whole, terribly unromantic and commonplace; it deals in realism of a very uncompromising form; it calls a spade a spade, and considers sentiment an unpardonable affectation. But Ellen Terry is the one anachronism that the age forgives; she is the one living instance of an ideal being that the purists pardon. As she stands before these cold critics in her classical robes as Camma; as she drags at their heart-strings as the forlorn and abandoned Olivia; as she trips upon the stage as Beatrice; as she appears in a wondrous robe of shot-red and gold, or clothed "in white samite, mystic, wonderful," as Ophelia, or, as she falls a-weeping as the heart-broken queen on the breast of Charles the First, even these well-balanced natures pronounce her inexplicable but charming. She is the one actress who cannot be criticized; for is she not Ellen Terry?"

[3] "All that has been said in recognition of Mr. Irving's intellectual leadership, and of his puissant genius and beautiful and thorough method of dramatic art, was more than justified by his impersonation of Louis XI., given yesterday afternoon, before an audience mainly composed of actors, at the Star Theatre. He has not, since the remarkable occasion of his first advent in America, acted with such a noble affluence of power as he dis-

Nothing could be more satisfactory to Mr. Irving and to his friends, after the demonstrative applause of this very remarkable audience, than the "Interviews" of many of the best-known actors and actresses which appeared in the *Herald* on the following morning. Irving had no idea that such a tribute was to be paid to him when, in talking with some gentlemen of the press, at the close of the play, he said,—

"I never played before such an audience, so spon-

played in this splendid and wonderful effort. It was not only an expression, most vivid and profound, of the intricate, grisly, and terrible nature of King Louis; it was a disclosure of the manifold artistic resources, the fine intuition, the repose, and the commanding intellectual energy of the actor himself. An intellectual audience—eager, alert, responsive, quick to see the intention almost before it was suggested, and to recognize each and every point, however subtle and delicate, of the actor's art—seemed to awaken all his latent fire, and nerve him to a free and bounteous utterance of his own spirit; and every sensitive mind in that numerous and brilliant throng most assuredly felt the presence of a royal nature, and a great artist in acting. Upon Mr. Irving's first entrance the applause of welcome was prodigious, and it was long before it died away. More than one scene was interrupted by the uncontrollable enthusiasm of the house, and eight times in the course of the performance Mr. Irving was called back upon the scene. A kindred enthusiasm was communicated to the other actors, and an unusual spirit of emulation pervaded the entire company and representation. . . . . At the close there was a tumult of applause, and the expectation seemed eager and general that Mr. Irving would personally address the assembly. He retired, however, with a bow of farewell. 'Louis XI.' will be repeated to-night."—*The Tribune, November* 21.

taneous in its appreciation and applause, and it will remain with me as one of the most interesting and most memorable events in my dramatic career. It is very commonly said that actors are the worst judges of acting. But I would ask why should actors be worse judges of their art than painters of paintings, or musicians of music?"

"Your audience was very enthusiastic, was it not?"

"It could not well have been more so. You see actors know well from experience that an actor, to be stimulated, needs applause, and plenty of it. Applause is as necessary to an actor as to an orator. The greater the applause the more enthusiasm the actor puts into his work. Therefore those who applaud most get most, and consequently my audience of this afternoon—"

"Got the most out of your performance?"

"Well, they certainly excited me to feel the effect of their appreciation on my own work. I felt an elation for them, and an elation such as I have rarely experienced. I happened to walk into Mr. Millais' studio before leaving England. He had just finished a painting in which I was interested—in fact, it was a portrait of myself. I found him in an extraordinarily cheerful mood. He clapped his hands with delight, as he said, pointing to the portrait, 'Watts has just been here, and says it is the best thing I have ever

done.' Millais was especially pleased, for this compliment came from a brother artist. I dare say you will see the parallel in this my especial pleasure in receiving the plaudits of my brother artists."

"And how did the audience differ from the audiences you have been playing to here?"

"This is the distinction, I think,—actors applaud all the touches as you put them on; a general audience applaud the whole effect when made. And so it was that all the little asides and touches of by-play this afternoon were taken with as keen an appreciation of them as of the whole effect of any scene or situation. I felt that my audience thoroughly knew what they were applauding for. I felt that they applauded myself and our company because they were really pleased, and I will say again that my first professional *matinée* has proved to be one of the pleasantest events of my life."

"It was a great performance," said Mr. Edward Gilmore, one of the managers of Niblo's Garden. "I have seen a good deal of acting," said Mrs. Agnes Booth; "but I can honestly say I have never seen anything that pleased me more: it was simply perfect."

"I have seen most of the performances in Europe of recent times," said Mdme. Cottrelly, who had been a leading German actress and manager before appearing

on the Casino stage; "but I have never seen anything that equalled Mr. Irving's performance this afternoon. I have never seen anything in the theatrical line that has been mounted more correctly. It has not been surpassed in the finest German Court theatres that I have attended."

"I think it is altogether one of the greatest performances the American public and profession have ever seen," said Mr. Dan Harkins. "The wonderful perfection of detail and subtlety of by-play is, I think, greater than I have seen in any other performance, excepting, perhaps, Mr. Forrest's 'King Lear.' Mr. Irving also is in a constant state of activity; when he is not talking he is acting. He is making some clever point all the time. The whole performance is great. It is great in the leading character, great in all that is subordinate to it, which, by an excellent stage management and a fine company, are brought into unusual prominence."

Mr. McCaull remarked: "It's a long way the finest piece of character-acting I have ever seen. Of course, I'm a young man, and haven't seen much; but I've seen Mr. Irving twice in this part, and when I go to see a performance—out of my own theatre—twice, I can tell you that, in my opinion, it must be a very fine one."

"I am very familiar with 'Louis XI,'" said Mr.

Harry Edwards,[4] "as I have played in it myself a great deal. I appeared as Nemours with Mr. Gusta-

[4] Henry Edwards was born at Ross, Herefordshire, England, August, 1831. He finished his education under the Rev. Abraham Lander, son of the friend of Robert Burns, and studied for the law in his father's office. In 1848 he became a member of the Western Dramatic Amateur Society. In 1853 he emigrated to Australia, passed three years in the bush, and went on the stage professionally, at the Queen's Theatre, Melbourne, under the management of Charles Young, then the husband of Mrs. Herman Vezin, who was the leading lady. After supporting the late Gustavus V. Brooke, he went, as leading man, to Tasmania, under the management of Charles Poole. He again joined Brooke, and for six or seven years was his second, playing Iago. Macduff, De Maupry, Icilius, &c., becoming manager of the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, for G. V. Brooke, in 1861. He afterwards travelled with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean, playing Falconbridge, Henry VIII., Coitier, &c. In 1865 he went to New Zealand, and managed theatres in Auckland and Hokitiki. He left the colonies early in 1866, passed four months in Lima, giving, in all, thirty-three performances in the Peruvian capital, aided by a small company. He also gave entertainments in Panama. Arrived in San Francisco, October, 1866, under an engagement to Thomas Maguire, opened in that city as Othello to the Iago of John McCullough, and afterwards played Pythias, Sir Anthony Absolute, Sir Peter Teazle, Marc Antony, and Sir John Falstaff. At the opening of the California Theatre, he joined Barrett and McCullough's company, and remained to the close of the latter's management. He went to New York in 1879, and opened at Wallack's Theatre (now the Star), in Byron's comedy of "Our Girls," and has been ever since a member of Wallack's company, of which he is now stage director. He is an earnest entomologist, and has one of the largest private collections of insects in the world, numbering over 260,000 specimens; has written much on his favourite study, as well as many magazine and other articles; is the author of "Pacific Coast Le-

vus V. Brooke, and his performance of Louis XI. was a very fine one. I then travelled for a year with Charles Kean, and played Courtier, the Physician, in 'Louis XI.,' and once appeared with Kean as Courtier. I also played Nemours with Charles Couldock. Well, I say all this to show you that I am pretty familiar with the play, and with great actors who have played 'Louis XI.' Mr. Irving's Louis is one of the greatest performances I have ever seen as a whole, and far superior to that of any of his predecessors. He brings depth, more intensity, and more variety to the character than any of them. His facial action is something wonderful. His performance stands on the highest plane of dramatic excellence, and on the same plane as Macready's famous Werner. I may say that I am not an admirer of Mr. Irving in all parts, but his Louis is unapproachable. I never enjoyed a performance so much in my life, and I felt that I could sit it out for a week if I were given the opportunity."

"He is the greatest actor who speaks the English

pidoptera," and a volume of sketches called "A Mingled Yarn;" is engaged to write the article on "Butterflies," for Kingsley's Standard Natural History, in association with Asa Gray, Prof. Baird, Prof. Packard, A. Agassiz, and other distinguished naturalists; and was five years President of the Bohemian Club, San Francisco, three years Vice-President of the California Academy of Sciences, and one year President of the Lambs Club, New York.

language," said Mr. Lewis Morrison. "I claim to know what good acting is. I have supported Salvini, whom I regard as the greatest artist on the foreign stage, and my preceptor was Edwin Booth. But even in Mr. Booth's presence I must say that I have been moved to-day as I never was before. I am not given to gushing over an actor; but I never before saw a man's soul as I did in King Louis this afternoon. It was simply perfection. It was not the actor; it was Louis XI. that I saw. I must admit that I went to the theatre with a little prejudice against Mr. Irving. I had never seen him, and, from certain things which other actors had told me, I was prepared to find an over-rated man. But what a performance it was! It was wonderful!—wonderful!"

Mr. W. A. McConnell, manager of Haverly's Brooklyn Theatre, said, "He is a great actor. I have never before seen such conscientious attention to detail, such harmony in everything, from the people on the stage with him down to the smallest thing. It is a lesson for us all."

"As a manager," said Mr. Palmer, of the Union Square Theatre, "it was a revelation to me to see such conscientious attention to detail. Every little thing in which good stage management could have been exhibited was shown by Mr. Irving's company. They worked as one man. I have heard but one opinion

among members of our company,—everybody was delighted."

"What can I say that is strong enough?" exclaimed Miss Cary, of the Union Square Theatre company. "I was delighted beyond measure. What a wonderful teacher Irving must be, and what a master of his art in every way! What impressed me particularly was the perfect harmony of the entire performance. How carefully and patiently everybody must have been drilled, and every detail which would add to the effect looked after!"

Mr. Osmond Tearle said, "I had seen Mr. Irving in everything except 'Louis XI.' before to-day's *matinée*, and I have always admired him greatly as an actor. Now I have seen him as Louis XI. I admire him still more. It is the greatest thing I have ever seen him do. His business, as he warmed himself at the fire, was remarkable. When he came on in the last act, he looked like one of the fine old royal figures that stand outside York Minster in England; and when he took his crown off he looked like the picture of Father Time. His facial expression is astonishing, and in the wonderful death scene his eyes seem to have gone altogether. The whole performance was fine; there was not a bad part in it."

"I have only one word to say on this subject," said Mr. John Gilbert, "and that is, that it is wonderful;

perhaps I, however, may supplement that by saying that it is 'extraordinary.' I have seen Mr. Irving play 'Louis XI.' before to-day, and, in fact, I have attended nearly all his performances at the Star Theatre; but this afternoon he exceeded anything that he has done here before. He was clearly moved, in no slight degree, by the almost incessant applause of his professional brethren. I don't know that I remember having seen a greater performance by any actor, not even excepting Macready's Werner. I am not astonished at Mr. Irving's great popularity in England. I am sure he deserves it."

"I had never seen Mr. Irving before this afternoon," said Mr. James Lewis, "and I was certainly not disappointed, although I had formed the highest expectations of him as an actor. There was a young actor, about nineteen years old, that sat by me, and he got on his seat and yelled 'Bravo!' Now, I didn't do that; but I was just as much pleased and excited as the youngster. I think it was the greatest performance I ever saw. You have, perhaps, heard the popular gag, 'That man tires me.' Well, that man, Mr. Irving, tired me; but it was because he so wrought upon my feelings that when the play was over I felt so exhausted that I could hardly leave my seat. The stage-setting and management were good, but I have seen as good in this city before."

Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, of Daly's theatre, thought that it was the finest performance within her experience. "In the confession scene," she said, "I thought him especially remarkable. I had seen him in 'The Lyons Mail' in London, and, now that I have seen his Louis XI., I want to see him in all his characters. The great applause that was given him by the vast gathering of his profession was, I assure you, not complimentary applause, but it was given in pure admiration of his great achievements.

"Mr. Irving's Louis," said Mr. Dan Frohman, "is a vivid and powerful transcript from history. Once or twice, at the end of an act, he lapsed into his natural voice; but this may be excused from the great draught that such a character must make upon his strength. As a picture of the subtle, crafty, and avaricious old monarch, his representation was absolutely perfect. I think Mr. Irving's Louis XI., in a word, is a sort of dramatic liberal education. Every actor can learn something from him. I wish our actors could keep the integrity of their characters as perfectly as Mr. Irving does."

"Mr. Irving is the greatest actor I have ever seen," said Mr. Tony Pastor. "I have been to see him several times, and this is my opinion. It ain't buncombe. It comes from the heart. I've seen all the greatest actors, and have been a great deal to the

theatres since I have been in this business; but I have never seen any one as good as Mr. Irving. This is a compliment I am paying to a man I am not personally acquainted with, and perhaps we shall never meet."

"Mr. Irving's Louis," Mr. Colville said, "is superior beyond criticism. It is the most perfect performance I have ever witnessed. I was acting manager of the old Broadway Theatre when Charles Kean played there, and, of course, saw him in the part."

III.

"If one had arranged events in America to one's own liking one could not have had them go along more pleasantly," said Irving, one Sunday afternoon, when he was giving me an account of his visit to Mr. Henry Ward Beecher and Mrs. Beecher, at Brooklyn; "indeed one would have had to lay in a stock of vanity to even dream of such a reception as we have had. It needs a little hostility here and there in the press at home and on this side to give a wholesome flavour to the sweets. It is a great reward, all this, for one's labour. I was struck the other day with some passages of Emerson, in his essay on Fate, where he says, 'Concentration is the secret of strength in politics, in war, in trade; in short, in all management of human affairs. One of the high anecdotes of the

world is the reply of Newton to the inquiry, how he had "been able to achieve his discoveries:" "By always intending my mind." *Diligence passe sens*, Henry VIII. was wont to say, or, Great is drill. John Kemble said that the worst provincial company of actors would go through a play better than the best amateur company. No genius can recite a ballad at first reading so well as mediocrity can at the fifteenth or twentieth reading. A humorous friend of mine thinks the reason Nature is so perfect in her art, and gets up such inconceivably fine sunsets, is, that "she has learned at last by dint of doing the same thing so very often." ' A wonderful writer, Emerson! He gives the right cue to all stage managers,—rehearsal! rehearsal! Mr. Beecher has evidently been a hard worker all his life, a persistent man; and nothing is done without it. First lay down your lines; settle what you mean to do, what you find you can do, and do it; the greater the opposition the more courageous and persevering you must be; and if you are right, and strength and life hold out, you must win. But I want to tell you about the visit to Brooklyn. Miss Terry and I were invited to visit Mr. Henry Ward Beecher. We went on Sunday to his church. He preached a good, stirring sermon, full of strong common-sense. It was what might, in some respects, be called an old-fashioned sermon, though it was also exceedingly

liberal. The spirit of its teaching was the doctrine of brotherly love. The preacher told his congregation that a man was not simply a follower of Christ, because he went to church on Sundays. A man could, he said, be a follower of the Saviour without going to church at all. He could also be a follower of Christ if he wished, and belong to any church he liked,—Baptist, Wesleyan, Lutheran. A Pagan could be a follower of Christ if he lived up to His doctrine of charity. To do good is the chief end and aim of a good life. It was an extemporaneous sermon so far as the absence of manuscript or notes went, and was delivered with masterful point and vigour, and with some touches of pure comedy — Mr. Beecher is a great comedian. After the service he came to us, and offered his arm to Miss Terry. She took one arm, his wife the other. I followed with his son and several other relations. A few members of the congregation joined the little procession. Following Mr. Beecher and the ladies, we walked down the aisle and into the street, to his house. There was something very simple and dignified about the whole business, something that to me smacked of the primitive churches, without their austerity. Mrs. Beecher is seventy-one years of age; a perfect gentlewoman, Quaker-like in her dress and manners, gentle of speech, but with a certain suggestion of firmness of purpose. Beecher struck me as a

strong, robust, genial, human man, a broad, big fellow. We had dinner,—the early dinner that was in vogue when I was a boy. It was, I should say, a regular solid New England meal,—rich soup, plenty of fish, a joint of beef; and some generous port was on the table. The host was most pleasant and simple, the hostess, most unsophisticated and kindly. She took greatly to Miss Terry, who also took greatly to her."

"Mr. Beecher had been at the theatre the night before?"

"Yes, to see 'Louis XI.'"

"Did he talk much?"

"Oh, yes, and his conversation was most interesting. He related, and very graphically, an incident of the troubled times before the abolition of slavery. 'One day in the pulpit,' he said, 'I asked my people, suppose you had a sister, and she came to you and said, "I would like to stay in your city of Brooklyn; I think I would be very happy here; but I must go away, I cannot stay; I must depart, probably to live with a reprobate, some hard, cruel man, who will lay claim to me, body and soul." You say, "Why, why must you go?" She answers, "Because my body is worth so much, and I am to be sold; and my little child—it, too, is of value in the same way—my child will be sold, and we shall be separated." There was a dead silence in the church. 'My friends,' I said,

'you have a sister in that position; and I want you to buy that woman!' 'Come up here, Dinah Cullum' (or whatever her name was), I said, and out of the congregation stepped a beautiful woman, a mulatto, and I said, 'Here she is; here is my sister, your sister!' The collecting basket was sent around. More than enough was realized to buy the woman. And I said to her, 'Dinah Cullum, you are free.' Then addressing my people again, I said, 'Now you can buy the child;' and they did, and we gave the child to its mother!"

"It used to be said of Lord Beaconsfield," Irving continued, "that his Oriental blood and his race instincts gave him his fondness for jewels; but Beecher seems to have the same kind of taste. He brought out from a cabinet a handful of rings, and asked me which I thought Miss Terry would like best. Then he took them to her, and she selected an *aqua marina*, which he placed upon her finger, and begged her to accept as a souvenir of her visit to Brooklyn. 'May I?' said Miss Terry to Mrs. Beecher. 'Yes, my dear, take it,' said Mrs. Beecher, and she did. It was quite touching to see the two women together, so different in their stations, their years, their occupations. Miss Terry was the first actress Mrs. Beecher had ever known. To begin with, she was very courteous; her greeting was hospitable, but not cordial. The sug-

gestion of coldness in her demeanour gradually thawed, and at the close of the visit she took Miss Terry into her arms, and the two women cried. 'One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.' Human sympathy,—what a fine thing it is! It is easy to understand how a woman of the training and surroundings that belong to the class in which Mrs. Beecher has lived might regard an actress, and especially one who has made a name, and is therefore the object of gossip. All the more delightful is the bit of womanly sympathy that can bind together two natures which the austerity of professed religionists would keep asunder."

"It is a greater triumph for the stage than you, perhaps, quite appreciate,—this visit to the home of a popular preacher; for, however liberal Mr. Beecher's sentiments may be in regard to plays and players, there are members of his congregation who will not approve of his going to the theatre, and who will probably be horrified at his entertaining you at his own home."

"No doubt," Irving replied. "Beecher said to me, 'I wish you could come and spend a week with me at my little country-house. You might leave all the talking to me, if you liked. I would give you a bit of a sermon now and then, and you in return should give me a bit of acting. Oh, we should have a pleasant time! You could lie on your back and smoke

and rest. I suppose some day you will allow yourself a little rest.'"

"What was the Beecher home like? New or old,—characteristic of the host or not?"

"Quite characteristic, I should say. It impressed me as a home that had been gradually furnished over a period of many years. That was particularly the case with regard to the library. Around the walls were a series of cabinets, with old china and glass in them. The room had an old English, or what I suppose would be called an old New England, appearance. Books, pictures, china, and a wholesome perfume of tobacco-smoke. Mr. Beecher does not smoke, but his sons do. 'I cannot pretend to put down these small vices,' he said. 'I once tried to, I believe.' 'Oh, yes,' said one of his sons, a fine fellow, 'the only thrashing he ever gave me was for smoking a cigar; and when the war broke out, and I went to the front, the first present I received from home was a box of cigars, sent to me by my father.' Altogether I was deeply impressed with Beecher. A robust, fearless man, I can quite understand how great he might be in face of opposition. Indeed, I was witness of this on the occasion of his famous platform fight at Manchester, during the war. I was acting in a stock company there at the time, and either in the first or last piece, I forget which, I was able to go and hear him speak. The inci-

dent, as you know, is historical on this side of the Atlantic, and it created quite a sensation in Manchester. The lecture-room was packed with secessionists. Beecher was attacking the South, and upholding the Federal cause. The great, surging crowd hooted and yelled at him. I fear I did not know much about the rights or wrongs of the matter. I had my work to do, and, though I watched the course of the American trouble, I had no very definite views about it. But I admired the American preacher. He faced his opponents with a calm, resolute face,—stood there like a rock. Whenever there was a lull in this commotion he would speak, and his words were defiant. There was the sound of the trumpet in them. We English admire courage, worship pluck, and after a time the men who had tried their hardest to shout Beecher down evidently felt ashamed. There presently arose cries of 'Hear him!' and 'Fair play!' Beecher stood there firm and defiant, and I felt my heart go out to him. Once more he got a few words in. They bore upon the rights of free speech, and in a little while he had the floor, as they say in America, and kept it. It seemed as if he were inspired. He spoke with a fervid eloquence I don't think I have ever heard equalled. In the end he carried the entire meeting with him. The crowd evidently knew no more about the real merits of the quarrel between North

and South than I did. They entered the hall Confederates, and left it out-and-out Federals, if one should judge by the thundering cheers that broke out every now and then during the remainder of Beecher's oration, and the unanimous applause that marked the finish of it."

IV.

Among the little suppers which Irving accepted after the play was a cosy entertainment given by Major Frank Bond, at which a dozen gentlemen of distinction in politics, science, and the army, were present. Dr. Fordyce Barker, who was intimate with Dickens, during that illustrious author's visits to America, was one of the guests. He started, among other subjects, a very interesting conversation.

"Have you ever made studies of deaths for stage purposes?" asked Dr. Barker.

"No."

"And yet your last moments of Mathias and of Louis XI. are perfectly consistent and correct psychologically."

"My idea is to make death in these cases a characteristic Nemesis; for example, Mathias dies of the fear of discovery; he is fatally haunted by the dread of being found out, and dies of it in a dream. Louis pulls himself together by a great effort of will in his

weakest physical moment, to fall dead—struck as if by a thunderbolt—while giving an arrogant command that is to control heaven itself; and it seems to me that he should collapse ignominiously, as I try to illustrate."

"You succeed perfectly," the doctor replied, "and from a physiological point of view, too."

"Hamlet's death, on the other hand, I would try to make sweet and gentle as the character, as if the 'flights of angels winged him to his rest.'"

"You seem to have a genius for fathoming the conceptions of your authors, Mr. Irving," said the doctor; "and it is, of course, very important to the illusion of a scene that the reality of it should be consistently maintained. Last night I went to see a play called 'Moths,' at Wallack's. There is a young man in it who acts very well; but he, probably by the fault of the author more than his own, commits a grave error in the manner of his death. We are told that he is shot through the lungs. This means almost immediate unconsciousness, and a quick, painless death; yet the actor in question came upon the stage after receiving this fatal wound, made a coherent speech, and died in a peaceful attitude."

"Talking of interesting psychological investigations," said Irving, "I came upon a curious story, the other day, of the execution of Dr. de la Pommerais, in

1864. He was a poisoner, somewhat after the Palmer type. I was present, then a boy, during the trial of the English murderer, and was, therefore, all the more interested in the last hours of the Frenchman. He was a skilled physician, it seems, and a surgeon named Velpeau visited him in his prison, the night before his execution, in the pure interest of physiological science. 'I need not tell you,' he said to De la Pommerais, 'that one of the most interesting questions in this connection is, whether any ray of memory or sensibility survives in the brain of a man after his head is severed from his body.' The condemned man turned a startled and anxious face to the surgeon. 'You are to die; nothing, it seems, can save you. Will you not, therefore, utilize your death in the interest of science?' Professional instinct mastered physical fear, and De la Pommerais said, 'I will, my friend; I will.' Velpeau then sat down, and the two discussed and arranged the proposed experiment. 'When the knife falls,' said Velpeau, 'I shall be standing at your side, and your head will at once pass from the executioner's hands into mine. I will then cry distinctly into your ear: "Count de la Pommerais, can you at this moment thrice lower the lid of your right eye while the left remains open?"' The next day, when the great surgeon reached the condemned cell, he found the doomed man practising the sign agreed upon. A few

minutes later the guillotine had done its work,—the head was in Velpeau's hands, and the question put. Familiar as he was with the most shocking scenes, it is said that Velpeau was almost frozen with terror as he saw the right lid fall, while the other eye looked fixedly at him. 'Again!' he cried frantically. The lids moved, but they did not part. It was all over. A ghastly story. One hopes it may not be true."

VIII.

A QUIET EVENING.

A first Visit behind the Scenes — Cooper and Kean—The University Club—A very notable Dinner—Chief Justice Davis and Lord Chief Justice Coleridge—A *Menu* worth discovering—Terrapin and canvas-back Duck—"A little Family Party"—Florence's Romance—Among the Lambs—The Fate of a Manuscript Speech—A Story of John Kemble—Words of Welcome—Last Night of the New York Engagement—*Au revoir!*

1.

"Turn the gas down a little."

"Yes, sir," said the attentive Irish-American waiter at the Brevoort House.

"And don't let us be disturbed."

"Very well, sir."

"The fire-light glows on the walls as if the so-called volcanic sunset had taken possession of the place," said Irving, stretching his legs upon the hearth; "what a rest it is to sit and talk to a friend and look into the fire!"

"It is, indeed. Let us have a chat in that spirit, and call the chapter 'A quiet evening.'"

"You mean a talk for the book?"

"Yes; one gets so few opportunities of this kind that it is worth while to avail ourselves of the present one. I think you had better tell me what you have done in New York, and I will chronicle it from your own lips."

"Do you mean generally, or in detail? There are some things that fix themselves in one's memory, not to be forgotten. Of course, the first night at the Star Theatre—one is not likely to forget that!"

"No, I shall always remember you standing in the door-way of the burgomaster's inn. It had seemed as if hours were passing between the rise of the curtain and your appearance!"

"Ah, I dare say; we were all more or less anxious."

"But let us get away from the theatre. What do you look back upon so far, to remember with special pleasure, in the way of social entertainment and American hospitalities?"

"It is difficult to select, is it not? It is bewildering to try to select the incidents. The Lotos dinner,—that was glorious, eh! How well Whitelaw Reid spoke!—and Mr. Depew, Dr. Macdonald, General

Porter, Mr. Oakey Hall,—everybody, in fact. A great gift to be able to express your thoughts well, standing up in the presence of others! Then the Lambs Club. I felt their reception as a very pleasant thing, because there were so many actors present. I think I got well out of the speech-making there by adopting Florence's written oration. That amused me greatly, and I think Florence enjoyed it as much as the others. Well, those are two of the New York events. I am endeavouring to think of them in their order, categorically. The breakfast which Mr. Joseph Harper gave me at the University Club,—what a rare lot of men! Mr. George William Curtis [1] struck me as one who might be very eloquent as a speaker."

[1] On a later occasion Mr. Curtis (whose eloquence on the platform and in the press, and whose independent career in politics, are familiar to all Americans and to many English) and Mr. Joseph Harper had a box to see "The Merchant of Venice." Irving invited them to go behind the scenes, and afterwards to join him at supper in his room at the Brevoort. Mr. Curtis said it was the first time he had been on that side of the footlights. "I am not sure whether I regret it or not; I think I am sorry to have the illusion of that last lovely scene at Belmont set aside even for a moment." While he was talking to Miss Terry in her dress as the Lady of Belmont, Loveday's men were bringing on some of the scenery of "The Lyons Mail." Said Harper, "Behind the scenes is always to me a good deal like the 'tween decks of a ship; the discipline is just as strict, too." During the evening, after supper, Mr. Curtis discussed with his host the question of how much an actor may lose himself in a part, and still have full control over

"He is."

"So I should have thought, and he talks of the stage with the unsophistication of one who knows nothing about it mechanically, but is full of the romantic and poetic spirit of it. Let me see, it was at Franklin Square where we saw that modern Dutch interior."

"The private room at Harpers and Brothers?"

"Yes, and where we again met Mr. Curtis, Mr. Alden, the editor of the magazine, and Mr. Conant of *The Weekly*, I remember. Don't you think that when

it and himself. Irving said circumstances sometimes influenced an actor. An event which had disturbed him during the day might give extra colour to his acting at night. In fact an actor is influenced by all sorts of causes,—as all other people are in their daily work,—by health or weather. Sometimes the presence of a friend in front, or some current occurrence of the moment, or piece of bad or good news, might influence him; but, as a rule, after an actor had played a particular part for a long time, he generally played it very much in the same way every night. "There is a story," he said, "of Kean and Cooper which is to the purpose. A friend met Kean, and told him that on a particular night he was at the theatre, and thought that Kean played Othello better than ever he had seen him play it. 'Gad, sir,' he said, 'I thought you would have strangled Iago outright!' Now we come to the solution of this extra energy which had impressed Kean's friend. 'Oh, yes,' said Kean; 'it was a Tuesday night, I remember; Cooper tried to get me out of the focus!' In those days the theatre was lighted with oil lamps, and only at one particular place on the stage could the actors be seen. To be in the light was to be in the focus; and that accounts for the old habit they had of getting into a line along the footlights."

America once takes up the work of a complete representation of legitimate and established plays, she will go ahead at it as fast as she has done in the production of book-engravings?"

"I do."

"And they tell me—actors tell me—that they have never had Shakespeare as completely and as worthily represented as at the Star this week. Mr. Gilbert says it will work a revolution in dramatic art in this country."

"The papers are beginning to say so all round."

"I confess I am as surprised as I am delighted. I thought more had been done in the way of harmonious representation, grouping, colour, painting, lighting, than is evidently the case. By the way, I heard a good deal about this on the night of the Century Club reception.[2] They were very like Garrick men, many

[2] Among the gentlemen present on this occasion were Messrs. Daniel Huntington (the president), Gilbert M. Speir (vice-president), A. R. MacDonough (secretary), Henry A. Oakey (treasurer), F. A. P. Barnard (President of Columbia College), Albert Bierstadt (the artist), Noah Brooks (journalist and author), L. P. di Cesnola, S. S. Conant; Profs. Botta, Dwight, Flint, Alexander, and Lusk; Judges Choate, Brown, and Daily; Bishop Potter, the Rev. Dr. Rylance, the Rev. Dr. Storrs, the Rev. Dr. Brooks; the Honourables John Bigelow, John Hay, J. G. Forrest, and Edward Mitchell; Mr. Joseph Drexel (the banker), Ex-Governor William Dorsheimer, Ex-Mayor Edward Cooper, Col. Goddard, Gen. Cullum and Gen. Horace Porter,

of them. An excellent idea having an exhibition of pictures at a club! I suppose it would hardly do in London to allow members such a margin in regard to the friends they introduce as in New York. I wish it could be done, and, especially, that granting of the entire privileges of the club to the stranger whom you invite to dinner. In case of transient membership, the compliment we pay to a stranger at the Garrick does include all the privileges of the club. The Manhattan is a cosy club. We got our first canvas-back in New York there. It was a little too early in the season; but in the way of a terrapin and canvas-back dinner the feast Buck gave us at Sieghortner's was a triumph.[3]

Dr. George Otis, and Messrs. W. Dodge, Wm. M. Evarts, Cyrus W. Field, Swain Gifford, Richard W. Gilder, Quincy A. Gillmore, Parke Godwin, H. H. Gorringe, I. H. Gourlie, G. S. Greene, M. K. Jessup, S. E. Lane, Francis F. Marbury, C. H. Marshall, H. D. Noyes, O. Ottendorfer, H. E. Pellew, Whitelaw Reid, Jas. Renouck, R. G. Remson, A. Thorndike Rice, William Bond, J. F. Ruggles, John O. Sargent, W. Satterlee, Clarence A. Seward, R. H. Stoddard, H. C. Van Vorst, Theodore Weston, Alfred Wilkinson, and many other well-known members of the club and their friends.

[3] This was a very notable gathering on November 18. In nearly every case the guests came from long distances. They were all men of distinction in their several walks of life. Among them were, James H. Rutter, President New York Central and Hudson River Railway; Hon. Noah Davis, Chief Justice Supreme Court, State of New York; Geo. R. Blanchard, Vice-President New York, Lake Erie, and Western Railway; Gen. Horace Porter, President New York, West Shore, and Buffalo

It scored by its simplicity. Let me see, I have the *menu* here. Now to look at it, in comparison with what

Railway; John B. Carson, Vice-President and General Manager Hannibal and St. Joseph Railway, Hannibal, Mo.; Col. P. S. Michie, U.S. Army, West Point; Hon. A. J. Vanderpoel, New York; Hon. Wm. Dorsheimer, Member of Congress and ex-Lieut.-Governor New York; Col. L. M. Dayton, Gen. Sherman's Chief of Staff during the war, Cincinnati, O.; Jas. N. Matthews, Proprietor Buffalo *Express*, Buffalo, N.Y.; Hon. Henry Watterson, ex-M.C. and editor *Courier Journal*, Louisville, Ky.; Col. Wm. V. Hutchings, Governor's Staff, Boston, Mass.; Col. H. G. Parker, Proprietor *Saturday Evening Gazette*, Boston, Mass.; Col. Wm. Edwards, Cleveland, O.; Hon. L. I. Powers, Springfield, Mass.; Hon. M. P. Bush, Buffalo, N.Y.; John B. Lyon, Chicago, Ill.; Hon. A. Oakey Hall, ex-Mayor of New York City; Lord Bury, W. J. Florence, William Winter, Stephen Fiske, J. H. French, and Chas. Wyndham. The dinner was not reported in the press; nor were several other entertainments which are briefly sketched in the pages of these "Impressions."

The Chief Justice spoke in eloquent terms of Lord Coleridge, whom the American bar and bench had been proud to honour, and who, in his private and public life, realized the highest ideal of the American people. "It is our desire," he said, "the sincerest wish of America, to like the English people. We are always afraid that our visitors from the old country will not let us like them. When they do, and we can honestly respond, we are glad." Presently, alluding to Irving, he said, "We have watched your career over a long period of time, through the New York papers. We were prepared to be interested in you, and to bid you welcome. No people are more moved than ours to exercise their free and unbiased judgment. We have done so in your case, and are proud to acknowledge the greatness of the work you have done; to welcome you, and to take your hand, not only for what you have achieved in England, but for what you have done for us in America."

is called a swell dinner, some people would think its dishes wanting in variety and number. Somebody, I

Ex-Mayor Oakey Hall, in the course of some remarks supplementary of the speech of the Lord Chief Justice, said, "A morning cable despatch informs me that the Millais portrait of our guest was yesterday added to the walls of the Garrick Club, in completion of its gallery of David Garrick's legitimate successors. But on the walls of our memories to-night has been hung the original, impressive features, poetic eyes and hair, and a face so bright that it this moment reflects our looks of personal affection. I have had the personal felicity, thrice within the past fortnight, of seeing our guest in the serenity of private life. Friends knowing this have said to me, 'How did you like Henry Irving on the stage?' And I have answered, 'I have not yet seen Mr. Irving act.' True, I had seen, on the stage of the Star Theatre, Mathias, and Charles the First, and Louis the Eleventh, and Shylock, and Dubosceq and Lesergne, and against these characters I had seen printed on the bills of the play the name of Henry Irving; but never had it otherwise occurred to me, as an auditor, that the guest now before us,—original of the Millais picture,—and whom I saw at the banquets of the Lotos and Manhattan clubs, was representing these characters. On the contrary, I cannot connect Henry Irving, the gentleman of private life, with the actor. If you say he is the same, I must believe you. Indeed, I am now conscious of having lived in the seventeenth century, and of having beheld the veritable Charles as a man caressing his children and his Henrietta Maria,—a wife rather than a queen,—on the banks of the Thames, at Hampton Court, or as Majesty rebuking Oliver Cromwell. Nay, I have stood with Charles himself in the Whitehall Chamber of Death, and with my own streaming eyes I have witnessed his touching farewell of home and earth. I have forgotten the merchants of New York in the boxes, and I have really seen Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice. I have seen the dreaming victim of remorse. I have lived in the warrent realms of France, while Louis the Eleventh infected his

remember, said at the time, 'This is a man's dinner! Let us dissect it!'"

He had fetched the *menu* from his table, had returned to his seat by the fire, and was holding the *carte* before his face, partly to read it, and partly to ward off the glow of the hot coal.

"Now, *first*, oysters on the half shell, and I noticed they were on the half shell. That is the proper way

court with his own moral leprosy. I have known in 'The Lyons Mail' the self-respecting and shrinking merchant, and I have known his double, the besotted brute of a murderer. They are all realities to me at this moment. If you again tell me one man personated all these, and that this one man was the original yonder of the Millais portrait, I must believe you, for your honour's sake. During an active career of a quarter century I never had seen an approach to such a surrender of personal identity in an actor, nor such a surrender of the peculiarities of one representation when the actor grasped another. How all this contradicts a lively writer in the current (November) number of Clement Scott's *Theatre*, who declares that every great success of the stage is due to a correspondence of the natural peculiarities of an actor with the fictional peculiarities of the character portrayed. Is yonder gentleman a victim to remorse? Is he a Shylock? Is he a Dubosco? Has he the soul of a Charles? Least of all, has he one peculiarity of Louis? No. Then these great successes are won—if yonder guest be the actor—by a destruction of personal peculiarities and by portraying his own precise opposites, in his human nature. You have all seen these recently enacted characters. You now—some of you for the first time—behold the man Henry Irving, and hear him converse. To you as a jury, then, I appeal. Am I not right? Is not my experience yours?" (Ay!—Yes!—Yes!—and great applause.)

to serve an oyster, and they should be in their own liquor.[4] They were lying on a bed of crushed ice,—did you notice? The dainty half of a lemon was placed in the centre of them. Shall you include this conversation in the book?"

This last question he asked suddenly.

"Oh, yes; I think it will be very interesting."

"Then they will say I am a gourmand." [5]

[4] "Bathed in their own liquor."—*Sir Henry Thompson.*

[5] In case this charge against Irving should be exploited by the "little English correspondent" who undertakes to describe his "Palace on the Thames," let me say that, for one who talks so well about eating, Irving—next to a great authority on gourmandise—recently dead, alas!—is the most moderate diner I know. He discourses of dishes with the eloquence of Brillat Savarin, and eats as frugally as the "Original Walker" did, and is as easily contented as was my late friend Blanchard Jerrold ("Fin-Bec"), who wrote so much, and always so well, about the art of dining, that those who did not know him might naturally have regarded him as a gourmand. He knew the literature of "the table" thoroughly, but lived as simply as Irving does. It will be noted that it is the simplicity of the dinner under notice that awakens Irving's enthusiasm. New York, by the way, has many restaurants, in addition to its most famous one (Delmonico's) and the house in Lafayette Place. The Hoffman House and the Brunswick are well known for their excellent *cuisine*. Among the hotels that are equally famous for their *chefs* are the Everett House, the Windsor, the St. James', the Victoria, and the Clarendon. The latter is to New York what such establishments as Morley's and the oldest West End hotels are to London. It is one of the pleasantest, and certainly the quietest, of New York houses. There are very bad hotels in the United States, and very good ones; dear hotels, and hotels where

"Who?"

"Some of our friends in London."

He emphasized the word "friends."

"They do now; you are reported as giving suppers and banquets in London on a grander scale than ever Lucullus dreamed of!"

"Am I? Well, I like to have my friends around me; but I think they appreciate a mutton-chop, a glass of fine wine, and a good cigar as much as we do, and, after all, Dr. Johnson says, 'The man who can't take care of his stomach can't take care of anything else.' If to be a gourmand, or, rather, let us say *gourmet*,[6] is to enjoy a well-cooked and elegantly served little dinner or supper, then I plead guilty to the soft impeachment; so let us go on eating the Sieghortner banquet

the charges are fair; but the general idea of uniform excellence and uniform dearness which obtains in England is incorrect. One class of houses which the English traveller misses is the comfortable family inn or tavern (where the landlord and landlady are always at hand), common in England, France, and Germany; and the other absent luxuries, for the lack of which oysters and canvas-back ducks do not altogether compensate him, are the mutton-chop, the beefsteak, the ham and bacon, the sole, salmon, and bloaters of his own country.

[6] "The difference between a *gourmet* and gourmand we take to be this: a *gourmet* is he who selects, for his nice and learned delectation, the most choice delicacies, prepared in the most scientific manner; whereas the gourmand bears a closer analogy to that class of great eaters, ill-naturedly (we dare say) denominated or classed with aldermen."—*Haywood's Art of Dining.*

over again, just as we shall, I hope, in future years sit down and re-fight our American victories by an English fireside. To return to the bill of fare. *Second*, soup. A vegetable soup, that reminded me a little of the cock-a-lukie which is so well constructed at the Garrick in London, only that the vegetable basis of it is in an esculent we have not,—the gumbo, or okra, which is so delicious here. Sauterne with the oysters, and a remarkably fine sherry with the soup. *Third*, terrapin. I am told this came from Baltimore ready for the cook."

"They are celebrated at Baltimore for the three great American dishes,—oysters, terrapin, and canvas-back ducks. Terrapin is prepared there and shipped to all parts of the United States, and even to Europe. I am told that a Baltimore firm sends in the season supplies of terrapin and canvas-backs to England for the table of the Prince of Wales."

"Indeed," he answers, "his Royal Highness knows what is good! I wish he could have tasted the Baltimore terrapin at Sieghortner's. Buck is a friend of the Duke of Beaufort, and the Duke, they say, is up to all the luxurious tricks of American cooking.

"Now we are at the terrapin. It was handed round very hot, and, as your plate was removed, a fresh supply, better still, it seemed to me, was placed before you. It is polite to ask for terrapin twice; but, that no one

might be embarrassed, it was served twice. Champagne and Burgundy with the terrapin. I prefer champagne. 'Next to going to heaven,' said a friend near me, 'is to go down to ——, Baltimore, and eat terrapin.' *Fourth*, canvas-back duck. An entire breast of the bird on each plate. A chip-potato and a little celery; you should eat nothing else with a canvas-back duck, though some persons, I observe, take currant or cranberry jelly with it. As in the case of the terrapin, there were two courses of duck,—the first, roast; the second, grilled and devilled. An excellent notion this. A *soufflé* followed; then cheese; then coffee. That was the dinner; and it was one of the greatest successes I remember, in the way of dining; though I do not forget how perfectly we had terrapin and canvas-back cooked in our own humble little kitchen at the Lyceum Theatre."

"In responding to the toast of your health, you were very much moved?"

"I was. Chief Justice Davis supplemented the host's words so eloquently, and with so much heart and earnestness, that he touched me deeply. Then his references to England—to Lord Coleridge representing the high estate of the Bench, and to myself as being considered worthy in every way to represent my art, as he in his way is to represent his high calling—and his tender tributes to the old country, and to the deep,

sincere friendship that lies at the root of the relations between England and America,—this was all so sympathetic. And when I knew that many of the men around the board who cheered him so warmly had come as far as a thousand miles to meet me, I could not have attempted to say more than to try and thank them. There are occasions when silence is the best, when 'Gentlemen, I thank you; my heart is too full to say more,' is about the most eloquent speech you can make. Mr. John B. Lyon came all the way from Chicago in response to Buck's invitation; Mr. John B. Carson came from Quincy,—a day's journey farther than Chicago; he had been fifty-two hours on the train; Mr. Watterson,—what a bright, witty fellow he is!—came almost as far, from Louisville in the South."

II.

"The supper given to me by Mr. Florence, at the St. James' Hotel, was also an entertainment to remember. Quite a little family party, was it not? Mr. Jerome—Larry, as his friends call him—was splendid; and how many years of local dramatic history he had at his fingers' ends! We were quite a little family party; Gilbert, Edwards, Jefferson,—God bless him!—they were among the guests. Florence, if you remember, had after supper a great brass urn placed upon the table, sat before it, and made whisky toddy. How well actors

understand the art of sociability! 'Now, friends, let us gather round the tea-table,' said Florence, 'and try the brew!' We pronounced it 'nectar for the gods,' and so it was. Do you remember the interesting episode of his boyish days that Florence told us? I repeated it to some people who supped here the other night. It is worth printing, with his permission."

"And that of Mrs. Florence?" I suggest.

"Oh, yes, of course. I think I remember it. Florence was a very young man, a boy, in fact, and was filling one of his first engagements on any stage at the Bowery Theatre. A girl about his own age (who is now a wife, and a woman of position, in New York) in the company, was his first love. His adoration was mingled with the most gallant respect. Their salaries were about ten to twelve dollars each a week. For a time they only played in the first piece; for in those days two plays a night were more popular on the American stage than they are now. One evening, at about nine o'clock, after pulling himself together for so daring an effort in his course of courtship, he asked her if she would go to an adjacent restaurant and take something to eat. The house was kept by a person of the name of Shields, or Shiells. The supper-room was arranged something after the manner of the old London coffee-houses. It had compartments divided off from each other. Into one of these Florence

escorted his sweetheart. He asked her what she would take. After some hesitation, and a good deal of blushing (more probably on his part than on hers), she said oyster-stew and lemonade. He concluded to have the same,—an incongruous mixture, perhaps; but they were boy and girl. Florence was more than once on the eve of declaring his undying passion and asking her to name the day. Presently, supper being ended, they rose to go, and Florence discovered that he had come away without his purse, or, rather, his pocket-book, as they call it here. He explained to the Irish waiter (and Florence, I suspect, is himself of Irish descent), who cut him short by saying, 'No money? Oh, that won't do; you're not going to damage the moral character of the house, bringing of your girls here, and then say you can't pay the bill.'—'How dare you, sir!' exclaimed Florence, the girl shrinking back. 'Dare! Oh, bedad, if you put it that way, I'll just give you a piece of my mind;' and he did. It was a dirty piece, which hurt the poor young fellow. 'Take me to your master,' he said. The girl was crying; Florence was heartbroken. The master was not less rude than the man. 'Very well,' said the boy; 'here's my watch and ring. I will call and redeem them in the morning with the money. I am a member of the Bowery Company, and I will ask the manager to call and see you also. Your conduct is shameful!'—'By heaven, it is!'

exclaimed a stranger, who, with some others, was smoking near the desk of the clerk, or landlord. 'It is infamous! Cannot you understand that this young gentleman is a good, honest young fellow? Damme! you ought to apologize to him, and kick that waiter-fellow out. Don't frown at me, sir. Give the young gentleman his watch and ring. Here is a fifty-dollar bill; take what he owes, and give me the change.' The stranger was a well-dressed gentleman, with white hair; not old, but of a venerable appearance. They all went out together, Florence, the young lady, and their benefactor. As they stepped into the street, Florence said, 'I cannot sufficiently thank you, sir. Where shall I call and leave the money for you?'—'Oh, don't trouble yourself about it,' said the benevolent gentleman; 'your surly friend won't make much out of the transaction,—it was a counterfeit bill that he changed for me.'"

III.

Irving did not expect to be called upon for a set speech at the Lambs Club. The President, Mr. Florence, did, and was prepared. He made no secret of his nervousness, nor of his arrangements against failure. The manuscript of his address was lying before him during the dinner. He consulted it occa-

sionally, to the amusement of his neighbours. When the time came he rose, his speech in his hand, his heart in his mouth. The most eminent of actors have felt similar sensations under the influence of an exaggerated sense of the responsibility of making a public speech. This banquet of the Lambs was not reported in the newspapers. As in other instances where I have ventured to annex speeches and incidents for these pages, I have done so with the full consent of all the parties concerned.

"Gentlemen," said President Florence, "we have met to-night to do honour to a brother actor, for in that character do we welcome the distinguished guest of the evening,—an artist who has done more to elevate and dignify our calling than any actor that ever trod the stage."

A ringing cheer greeted these few sentences. The applause evidently disturbed the speaker's memory. He consulted his MS. and could make nothing of it. Throwing it upon the table, he continued his address. The few unstudied sentences that followed came from the heart, and were sufficiently effective. They commended Irving as an example to all of them,—an example of work, of unostentation, of success worthily won and worn, and expressed the gratification it afforded the Lambs—a club largely composed of actors—to welcome him at their board.

"I'll never make another speech as long as I live!" exclaimed the President, as he resumed his seat.

"Give me the manuscript," said Irving. "Do you mind my using it?"

"Not at all, my dear friend; do what you like with it."

Irving, rising to reply, stood up with the President's unspoken speech in his hand. Referring to the difficulties actors often experience in regard to public speaking, he said, "At Edinburgh, recently, looking over the old *Courant*, I came across an incident apropos of the present occasion. It was concerning a dinner given to John Kemble in that city. 'The chair was taken at six o'clock by Francis Jeffrey, Esq., who was most ably assisted by the croupiers, John Wilson and Walter Scott,'—the creator in fiction of poor, old, wretched King Louis XI.—Walter Scott, the mighty master of romance, who also proposed this night 'The memory of Burns.' (Applause.) In reply to the toast of his health, John Kemble said, 'I am not successful in extemporaneous delivery; actors are so much more in the habit of giving utterance to the thoughts of others than in embodying their own, that we are much in the same position with those animals who, subsisting by the aid of others, are completely lost when abandoned to their own resources.' Gentlemen, brother actors, I feel that I am in a similar

condition to-night. (Cries of 'No! no!' and laughter.) But my friend, the President, has given me leave to avail myself of the eloquent speech which he had written, but has not read to you." (Laughter.)

Irving looked down at the President for his final consent.

"Certainly, go ahead," was the response.

"The President," said Irving, reading the MS. amidst shouts of laughter and applause, "was anxious to tell you that 'the efforts of the guest of the evening have always been to make his dramatic work in every way worthy the respect and admiration of those who honour our art; and at the same time he has been none the less indefatigable in promoting the social and intellectual standing of the profession; this has been to him a labour of love.'"

Irving read these lines with mock-oratorical show; but when the laughter of his hearers changed to loud applause, he laid aside the written speech of his friend, and in a few simple words expressed himself proud of the honour the club had done him, and grateful for the cordiality of its welcome.

"There is one point, however, in that speech which I would like you to hear," said the President, rising again, and it is this: "We are not here to pass an opinion on Mr. Irving's qualities as an actor,—the critics have done that already; and, if you had at first

any doubts as to the high position he should occupy in our profession, the American critics and your own judgment have removed them. Possibly it was just as well that David Garrick did not live in the White Star epoch, for, had he ever crossed the Atlantic Ocean, his bones might not now be reposing so peacefully under the ancient towers of Westminster Abbey."

During the evening Mr. Henry Edwards,[7] of Wallack's, recited with stirring effect the following :—

WELCOME TO HENRY IRVING.

Round about the board of banquet
Blazed the bright wits of the town,
"A royal toast," and well they drank it—
"'Tis for a king to wear the crown ;
Thrones may totter in the tempest,
Empires, too, may rise and fall,
But a king, by grace of Genius,
Sits secure above them all."

Thus a grave and graceful poet,
And his glowing glass uplifts,
With a warm eye-flash of welcome
To the Man of Many Gifts;
Then a clamour and kindly clinking
Like sudden song breaks round the board,
And the soul of the wine they're drinking
Seems into their own souls pour'd.

[7] These lines were written by Mrs. Marion Fortescue, a lady well known in New York society.

And "Huzza for our guest, King Irving,"
From a hundred hearty throats,
And the lovingly lengthen'd greeting,
Like a chorus'd chime, up floats—
When more swift than an earthly echo
Bursts a sound over guest and hosts,
Strangely shrill, yet faint and far off—
"Way there for the coming ghosts!"

Into statued silence stricken,
Stand and gaze the speechless throng,
While the walls slide wide from side to side,
As if moved in grooves along,
And a shadowy stage, whose footlights
Loom white through a weirdly mist,
Is peopled with phantoms of players
Trooping in as if keeping a tryst.

Then with buskin'd steps and soundless,
Streaming forward as a tide,
Surge the serried shades of actors
Whose greatness time has testified;
And their brows are bound with bay-leaves,
And their garments' phantom'd fold
Shape out the bygone costumes
Of the parts they play'd of old.

All the fine and famous faces
In the records of the stage,
Canonized in highest places
On the drama's brightest page!
Their "brief hour" made eternal,
Where the deathless laurel nods,
And where Shakespeare reigns supernal
In the green-room of the gods!

There, each grandly vision'd visage,
  Looking through a mellow haze
On the spell-bound reverent watchers
  With a long, fraternal gaze,
Whose mute and mighty meaning
  Seems like a benediction cast
O'er the promise of the present
  By the high priests of the past!

Then, at an unseen, silent signal,
  Given by some mystic chief,
Each of the ghosts of great ones
  From his own wreath plucks a leaf,
And fleeter than arrow'd lightning
  Through space a chaplet 's sped!
And the brow of the actor living
  Is laurelled by actors dead!

And a sigh sweeps over the silence,
  And the walls are walls again,
While the lights flash up to brightness,
  And sparkles the gold champagne;
And the joyous voice of the Poet
  Rings out the blended toasts,
"Huzza for our good guest, Irving!"
  And "Huzza for our grand old ghosts!"

IV.

For the last night of the New York engagement the programme was a novelty, in every respect, to a New York audience. Custom confines the night's entertainment in American theatres to one piece. On this occasion the play-bill contained the first act of "Richard III.;" the Lyceum version of "The Belle's

Stratagem;" the, in England, well-known recitation of "Eugene Aram;" and Irving was also expected to make a speech. The programme was played to an enthusiastic audience; and, at the close of "The Belle's Stratagem," Mr. Irving addressed them as follows:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—A month ago, standing before you for the first time, and stimulated by your most kind welcome, I expressed the hope that our loves might increase as our days did grow. You, on your part, have fulfilled my dearest wishes, and I can but hope that we have not disappointed you. On that same first night I bespoke your good-will for my sister artist, Ellen Terry. I felt sure that she would win all hearts, and I believe she has. For her, for all my comrades, and for myself, I thank you for your enthusiastic and generous endorsement of our work. I am sorry that the time has come when I must leave you. I am glad that I have not yet to say 'Good-bye,' but only '*Au revoir*.' In April next we shall have the honour—if all be well—of appearing before you again, and I would propose to present to you 'Much Ado About Nothing' and 'Hamlet.' In my old home, on the other side of the Atlantic, these plays are often performed by us; and I hope they will be welcome in—if I may say so—my new home on this side of the sea. And now, ladies and gentlemen, with a grateful

remembrance of your kindness, I must say '*Au revoir.*' I find no words to adequately express my gratitude to you; indeed, I would feel but little if I could say how much."

Retiring for a few minutes, Irving, in evening dress, returned to the stage. A chair was placed in the centre of it. Now standing, now sitting, he recited Hood's dramatic poem. The audience sat spell-bound. Even as Mathias, with the accessories of the mysterious court-scene, Mr. Irving had not held New York play-goers with a firmer grip. They followed the grim story almost in silence. The ancient mariner's narrative did not more impress the wedding-guest. I have seen all kinds of audiences in both hemispheres, and under all sorts of circumstances, and never saw a theatre full of people more under the control of a story. At the end the applause was loud and continued for some minutes, the reciter having to bow his acknowledgments again and again. The next day a discriminating critic pointed out to one of Irving's few opponents, that "the *pseudo* critic who pronounced Irving's 'Bells' a mere success of lime-lights, properties, scenery, and stage-management," had been quite extinguished "by the recitation of Hood's 'Dream of Eugene Aram,' delivered in evening dress, without any lime-lights, properties, scenery, or stage-management."

"And," added a journalistic writer in the *Herald*, "aside from the artistic success Mr. Irving has made here, the financial result should be considered very satisfactory. The total amount received from subscriptions and box-office sales for the four weeks' engagement is $75,687. The receipts for the first week were $15,772; for the second week, $18,714; for the third week, $18,880; and for the week closing last evening, $22,321." It has been estimated that the public paid altogether, to speculators and to the box-office, upwards of $200,000. Judged, therefore, by the financial standard of the box-office, as well as by that of the highest criticism, New York's answer to the London *Standard* was a full and complete endorsement of the English popularity of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry."

But it remained for Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago to pronounce upon them. The campaign was only in its infancy, though the first stronghold had been won. An advance was made upon Philadelphia on the day following the recitation of "Eugene Aram." The reader who follows the fortunes of the campaigners in these pages will find the record justified by independent pens, and supported by the current chronicles of the entire Union.

IX.

AT PHILADELPHIA AND "IN CLOVER."

Rivalries of American Cities—Boston and Philadelphia—The real and the picturesque—Miss Terry's Portia—"Three kinds of Criticism"—First appearance as Hamlet—Miss Terry's Ophelia—Journalism and the Stage—Critics, past and present—Philadelphia and English Cities—A new style of Newspaper—Bogus Reports and Interviews: an example of them—The Clover Club—A Letter from an eminent American Tragedian—Presented with Forrest's Watch—The Macready trouble—Hamlet, and an invitation from Guest to Hosts.

1.

"The rivalries between American cities," said Irving, "seem to take a far more aggressive form than the rivalry between England and America, or even between France and England; I mean in regard to their criticisms of each other, and their hostile chaff or badinage in regard to each other's peculiarities."

"Is it not very much the same in England?"

"Perhaps."

"Sheffield scoffs at Birmingham, Liverpool sneers at Bristol, Manchester is supercilious concerning London," I said.

"And London mildly patronizes the whole of them. I think you are right; but one does not notice the competition at home so much, perhaps, as in America. Boston and Philadelphia seem to indulge in a good deal of badinage at each other's expense."

"And they are both sarcastic about the morality of Chicago."

"A Boston friend of ours," said Irving, "was telling me yesterday of a little war of words he had with a Philadelphian. Said Boston to the Quaker, 'Well, there is one thing in which you have the best of us.'—'Glad you admit one point in our favour anyhow; what is it?'—'You are nearer to New York than we are.' Our Boston friend is fond of New York, takes his holidays there; says he likes it nearly as well as London. A less subtle, but more direct, hit at Philadelphia was that of the Bostonian, who, in reply to the question of a Philadelphian, 'Why don't you lay out your streets properly?' said, 'If they were as dead as yours, we would lay them out.'"

"Looked at from a balloon," I said, "Philadelphia would have the appearance of a checker-board. Boston, on the other hand, would present many of the irregular features of an English city. Both cities are

eminently representative of American characteristics, and both are possibly more English in their habits, manners, and customs than any other cities of the Union."

"There is nothing dead about the Philadelphia streets so far as I have noticed them," Irving replied. "This morning I walked along Chestnut Street, and thought it particularly lively and pleasant. The absence of the elevated railroad struck me as an advantage. I felt that when walking down Broadway, in New York. Then the cars in the street itself did not rush along at the New York pace. These seem to me to be advantages in their way on the side of life in Philadelphia. Perhaps one feels the rest, too, of a calmer city, a quieter atmosphere."

We are sitting near a front window at the Bellevue, looking out upon Broad Street. Presently we are joined by the interviewer, and Irving is not long before he is engaged in a conversation about the actor's art and his own methods.

"Every character," he says, "has its proper place on the stage, and each should be developed to its greatest excellence, without unduly intruding upon another, or impairing the general harmony of the picture. Nothing, perhaps, is more difficult in a play than to determine the exact relation of the real, and what I may call the picturesque. For instance, it is

the custom in Alsatia for men to wear their hats in a public room; but in a play located in that country it would not do to have a room scene in which a number of men should sit around on the stage with their hats on. There are reasons why they should not do that. In the first place, their hats would hide their faces from the audience. It is also an incongruity to see men sitting in the presence of an audience with their heads covered. Then, again, the attention of the audience would be distracted from the play by a feeling of curiosity as to the reason why the hats were not removed. These are little things that should be avoided; but in general they are not likely to intrude themselves where proper regard is paid to the general appearance of a scene. The make-up of the stage is exactly like the drawing of a picture, in which lights and colours are studied, with a view to their effect upon the whole. There is another feature. I would not have the costume and general appearance of a company of soldiers returning from a war exactly the same as they appeared when the men were starting for the battle-field. I would have them dishevel their hair and assume a careworn aspect, but yet appear in clean clothes. Everything on the stage should always be clean and pleasant."

The subject of realism being mentioned, he said his death in "The Bells" had been called very realistic,

whereas the entire story was unrealistic, in the strict sense, particularly the trial and death. "Dramatically poetic, if you like," he said, "but not realistic. There are so-called realisms on the stage that are no doubt offensive,—overstrained illustrations of the pangs of death, physical deformities, and such like. As for the interest of an audience in the person who is acting, the knowledge that what they see is an impersonation has its intellectual attractions for them. For instance, it would not be satisfactory to see an old man of eighty play 'King Lear;' but it would be highly satisfactory to an audience to know that the character was being portrayed by a man in the vigour of life. As you look upon a picture you do not see something that is real, but something that draws upon the imagination.

"Perhaps there is no character about which such a variety of opinions has been expressed as that of Hamlet, and there is no book that will give any one as much opportunity of understanding it as the 'Variorum Shakespeare' of Mr. Horace Howard Furness. He is still a young man,—he is not an old man,—and I trust that he will be able to complete the whole of the work that he has begun, and I hope that some one will follow in his footsteps. It was a labour of love, of most intense love to him, and he has earned the gratitude of all readers of Shakespeare. I hope I shall meet him."

II.

The Chestnut Street Theatre, where Irving appeared on November 28, is a handsome brick building. The width of the stage at the proscenium is thirty-three feet, depth forty feet, height of proscenium forty feet. There are three tiers of seats, which will accommodate one thousand five hundred people. The theatre was first opened in 1863, under the management of William Wheatley, with Edwin Forrest as the leading actor. The interior was reconstructed in 1874, and improved in 1875, with results that make the house singularly elegant and comfortable. Among the audience on the first night of Irving's appearance were his old friend Mr. McHenry, and a party of relatives and friends; the latter including Lord and Lady Bury, whom he and Miss Terry, and several of his fellow-travellers, met at a number of social receptions during the week.

Irving's Louis made just as profound an impression here as in New York. "No finer performance has been seen on the Philadelphian stage for many years," said the *Ledger*. "From his first appearance on the stage to the moment when he falls dead upon the floor, he rose from climax to climax, and held, not the hearts, but the minds, of his audience captive," said the *Inquirer;* and these notices give the cue to the general criticisms. The other plays were equally well received. Shylock excited

the usual controversy as to Shakespeare's intentions, but none as to Irving's interpretation of his own views. The critics, on the whole, were the honest mouthpieces of the audiences in regard to their enjoyment of the entire play. A writer, who confessed to disappointment in Miss Terry's Portia, and who counted Shylock's business as above his elocution, had "no words to express" his "admiration of the entire setting of the piece," which he described as "a discovery and a conquest." It is no reflection upon the literary skill and critical power of the Philadelphia press, when it has to be admitted that here and there the notices bore evidence of an influence preceding Mr. Irving's appearance, notably in the criticisms of Hamlet.

"There are three kinds of criticisms," said Irving, when discussing this point one evening after a quiet supper: "the criticism that is written before the play; the criticism that is more or less under the influence of the preconceived ideas that are associated with previous representations by other actors; and the criticism that is *bonâ fide* a result of the night's performance, and also, in a measure, an interpretation of the opinions of the audience. What I mean by a criticism written before the play, is the notice that has been partially prepared beforehand, in connection with the literature of the subject, and the controversies as to the proper or improper views taken of the character under discus-

sion. These start in on one side or the other, just as the writer feels about it, irrespective of the art that is exercised by the actor. This is more particularly the case in regard to Shylock and Hamlet. As to the latter character there is the natural loyalty some writers feel towards what is called the established or accepted Hamlet of the country. It is not given to all men to feel that art is universal and of no country. Don't think I am complaining; I am not. I am trying to justify some of the Philadelphian notices of Hamlet, which were in opposition to the verdict of the audience before whom I played it in America for the first time."

"You were warned that Philadelphia claims to occupy the highest critical chair in America; and that, of all other cities, it would be the least likely to accept a new Hamlet, especially a natural and human Hamlet as against the artificial school—an impersonation as opposed to mere declamation."

"I think that decided me to play Hamlet for the first time in Philadelphia; and I never played it to an audience that entered more fully into the spirit of my work."

"I have never," said a Philadelphian, "seen an audience in this city rise and cheer an actor as they cheered you when you took your call after the play scene in Hamlet. Such enthusiasm is unknown here.

Miss Terry and yourself both might have had scene calls of the most cordial character. You refused them; it is a rule, I understand, with you to do so. The excitement of some audiences would have been dampened by these checks. Not so yours,—the calls at the close of the play were quite phenomenal for Philadelphia."

A numerous company of critics and reporters came from New York, Boston, and other cities, to be present at Irving's first appearance in Hamlet. Nowhere at any time during the tour were the influences of London so apparent as in the criticisms of Hamlet at Philadelphia. Some of them were entirely out of harmony with the warmly expressed satisfaction of one of the most intellectual audiences ever gathered together in the Chestnut Street Theatre.[1] For instance, the *Evening Bulletin* found in the duelling scene reminiscences of "æsthetic sketches from *Punch*," and

[1] "Mr. Irving presented a Hamlet last evening that was entirely consistent with itself and with the play, and the most virile, picturesque, and lovable Hamlet that has been seen on the stage. There was great variety in his moods and manners. He realized Goethe's idea of a born prince,—gentle, thoughtful, and of most moral nature, without the strength of nerve to make a hero, and overcome by the responsibility put upon him by a vision whose message he alternately accepts and doubts. There was, indeed, the fullest variety given to the part; it was dramatically interesting, and a clearly marked, intelligent study that more than realized the expectations that had been formed of the personation."—*Philadelphia Ledger.*

the *Press* said, "It is unfortunate that Du Maurier has taken Miss Terry as the model of the æsthetic set. The curly blonde hair, delicate face, and soft, clinging robes reminded one so often of *Punch's* caricature, that it was difficult to take it seriously." There is, in certain critical circles of Philadelphia, the same kind of affectation of a knowledge of English thought, and a following of London taste, as there is in London in regard to French art and French criticism. The audience at the Chestnut Street Theatre had no difficulty in taking Miss Terry's Ophelia seriously. There was hardly a dry eye in the house during her mad scene. The *Bulletin* critic aired his knowledge of English affectation by associating her with "Burns-Jonesism;" but the *Times* found "Miss Terry's Ophelia tender and beautiful, and pathetic beyond any Ophelia we have lately seen." The *Record* described it as "sweet and unartificial as the innocent and demented maiden Shakespeare painted for us." Said the *Inquirer*, in a criticism of singular literary force:—

> In the play scene, in which he seemed to fill the whole stage, in which a real frenzy appeared to fall upon his mind, he justified by the greatness of his acting almost all that has been or could be said in praise of it. So grandly and impressively did he bring the scene to a close as to call down thunders of applause from an audience that he had thrilled and swayed by a power undeniably great. If that scene was ever before so nobly played, we were not there to see it done. Mr. Irving

rose to greater heights of excellence as the play proceeded. From the moment Miss Terry put her foot upon the scene she held and controlled her audience as she would. Never before upon our stage has there appeared an actress who played Ophelia with such lovely grace and piteous pathos. To all who saw this most perfect performance it was a revelation of a higher, purer, and nobler dramatic art than they had ever seen or dreamed. What she did just here or there, or how she did it, cannot be told. Over it all was cast the glamour of the genius in which this fine woman is so greatly blessed. She does not seem to act, but to do that which nature taught her.

III.

Talking of criticism and the press, the press and the stage, one evening, Irving expressed some views in regard to the influence and relations of the newspaper and the theatre which are full of suggestiveness and point.

"Journalism and the stage," he said, "have always been more or less in sympathy with each other. As they have progressed this sympathy may be said to have grown into an alliance in the best interests of civilization. As exponents of the highest thought of the greatest writers, as educationists of the most comprehensive character, the press and the stage are, I think, two of the most powerful institutions for good in our times, and represent the greatest possibilities in the future.

"It is interesting to contemplate how closely they are associated, these two institutions, artistically and

commercially. The advertisements of the theatres represent a large revenue to the newspapers; the employment of writers and reporters in chronicling and commenting upon the work of the theatres represents, on the other hand, an important outlay for the newspapers. The press is telling the story of the theatre from day to day; and, while it extends an earnest and honest sympathy to dramatic art in its highest aspirations, I hope the time will come when the criticism of the work of the stage will be considered one of the most serious features that belong to the general and varied compositions of a newspaper.

"In the past we, in England, at all events, look upon but two men as critics in the most complete sense,—men who, by thought and study, feeling and knowledge, had the power to sympathize with the intention of the artist, to enter into the motives of the actor himself, criticizing his conceptions according to his interpretation of that which he desires to express. These two writers were Lamb and Hazlitt. But nowadays we have thousands of critics. Every newspaper in Great Britain has its critic. Even the trade journals, and some of the professedly religious journals, have their critics, and some of them speak with an emphasis and an authority on the most abstruse principles of art which neither Lamb nor Hazlitt would have dreamed of assuming. I don't know how this contrasts with

America; but I am sure that when the conductors of the great journals of the two worlds are fully convinced of the deep interest and the friendly interest the people are taking in the stage, they will give increasing importance to the dramatic departments of their papers."

"You are going to a journalistic breakfast or supper one day this week," I said. "Is this your idea of the sort of speech you will make to them?" I asked, for he expressed his opinions with more than ordinary firmness, seeing that the topic was comparatively new.

"Well, I thought of saying something," he replied, walking all the time about his room. "Do you think the relations of the stage and the press a good subject?"

"Excellent," I said; "a text worthy of an essay in the *Fortnightly* or the *Edinburgh Review*."

IV.

Taking a quiet stroll along Broad Street, and occasionally up and down the thoroughfares right and left, on the first Sunday afternoon of our arrival in Philadelphia, we paused to note the people coming out of church and chapel.

"You know that part of Manchester called Hulme," said Irving. "Is not this quarter like that? Could

you not fancy we were in almost any suburban part of Manchester? And the people, do you see anything in their appearance to denote that they are any other than English?"

"No; they might be a Birmingham, or a Manchester, or a Liverpool crowd."

"Better dressed, perhaps, so far as the women go. This absence of strong contrasts between American and English is often noticeable. Nothing in that way struck me more forcibly than the Lotos Club dinner at New York. They might have been a gathering of London clubmen, only that they all made such singularly humorous speeches. The English after-dinner oratory is more solemn. And the audience here last night,—I could not see their faces, of course; but I felt their influence, and their response to various points was very English. I am told that it is thoroughly American to hurry away the moment the curtain falls on the last act."

"It certainly is the general practice of American audiences. An English friend of ours, and a popular comedian here, was only telling me yesterday how the habit afflicts him and his company. 'At first,' he said, 'it was terrible. We thought we had utterly failed, and we shall never get used to it.' He asked me how it affected you. I would not hurt his feelings, of course, by telling him that your audiences, so far, had waited

every night to applaud, and to call you and Miss Terry, and frequently other members of your company. I said you seemed to drop into the habits of the country easily."

"It is very generous, is it not? And I know they are making an exception with us, because my attention has been called to it so often. I drove down Chestnut Street yesterday. Have you noticed what a picturesque effect, both in form and colour, the sign-boards give to Chestnut Street? And there is something very clean and homelike about the private houses,—red brick mostly, with white marble steps and green blinds. The atmosphere of the place is calmer than New York. I have been reading a new daily paper here, the *Evening Call*,—very odd, clever kind of paper."

"Yes," I said; "it is a type of quite a new departure in daily journalism. The *Morning Journal*, in New York, and the *Evening News*, in Chicago, are examples in point. Akin to the first idea of the *Figaro*, in London, they are a little in the style of the *Cuckoo*, which croaked in the London streets for a short time. They may be considered as outside the competition of the regular high-class daily journals. They occupy ground of their own. Their leading idea is to amuse, rather than to instruct. They employ humorous versifiers, story-tellers, jesters. They are the cap and bells in print, the jester, or court-fool, in

newspapers; and sometimes are as personal as that very strange jester in the American play of 'Francesca da Rimini.' How this new form of daily journalism represents American civilization, or what side of it, is a point which Mr. Arnold or Spencer may be left to discuss. I am glad you have noticed it, because I have collected a few Philadelphian examples of its style,—bright, easy, clever, frivolous, perhaps, and sometimes a trifle broad, but full of go."

We sat down at the hotel to look over my notes, and here are a few items from them:—

Theatre-goer.—"I notice that a favourite device with Irving, in a moment of deep feeling, is for him to clutch and perhaps tear open the collar or loose scarf that is around his neck."

Scarf Manufacturer.—"Well, I declare! That is the best news that I have heard for a long time. Three cheers for Irving!"

Theatre-goer.—"Why, man, are you demented?"

Scarf Manufacturer.—"Not at all. Can't you see? The five hundred thousand amateur actors in this country will all be imitating Irving, and the result will be the biggest kind of a boom in scarves."

In the same column it is announced that "James Malley wants to go on the stage," and the editor adds, "We hope he will wait until eggs are cheaper." "You cannot convert 15,000 tons into 20,000 tons," is quoted as a remark of the late Lord Beaconsfield to accentuate the general grievance about short weight

in coals. "Dizzy's remark clearly shows that he knew nothing about the coal business." Plumbers in America are subjects of much newspaper sarcasm. "Three weeks ago," says the *Lock Haven Express*, "the writer sent for a plumber, who never appeared, but yesterday he sent in his bill." The *Call* prints this to add, "He must have been a poor sort of plumber to wait three weeks before sending in a bill." Chicago looks down upon some of the Eastern cities, and there is a rivalry between the journals of Chicago and the cities that are scorned, which is often amusing. "The only cure for love is marriage," says the *Call*; "the only cure for marriage, divorce. Beware of imitations; none genuine without the word 'Chicago' blown on the bottle."

An imaginary description of Irving's visit to the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, with an account of the family dinner and conversation, was started by one of these new daily papers, and it was repeated even by several of the more serious journals in other cities as a genuine thing. It is difficult sometimes to know when the news of some of these papers is true. Ingenious readers will probably ask in what respect they thus differ from other papers. But our satirical friends must always have their little joke. It strikes me as a weakness, in the programme of some of the new sheets, that you should for a moment be left in doubt as to when they

are in earnest and when in fun; when they are recording real events, or when they are chaffing history. Here is an extract from the "bogus" report of Irving's visit to Beecher:—

The party rested in the parlour until the dinner was ready. The conversation was of an every-day nature, and did not enter deeply either into theatricals or religion.

The party filed into the dining-room, Mr. Beecher behind, turning his cuffs end for end as he walked. In this room was a palatable show,—a big, fat goose, intrenched in gravy, and flanked by all kinds of vegetables, slept the final sleep in the centre of the table. Everything necessary accompanied the star of the feast.

"Dark meat, Miss Terry?" asked the reverend gentleman as he grasped the carver.

"If you please, with plenty of stuffing," returned the little lady.

All were helped from the generous goose, and Mr. Beecher sat down to enjoy his reward. He is very fond of onion stuffing, and had taken care that it was not all gone before his turn came.

"This goose," began Mr. Beecher, the bird's biographer, "has a history. She is the seventh goose of a seventh—"

Just what the reverend gentleman was going to attribute to the goose will not be known, as just then he tasted the stuffing. There was no onion in it. A stern look came over his face, and he was on the point of saying something when he caught the warning glance from his wife's eyes and kept quiet. Nothing was heard for ten minutes besides the tuneful play of knives, forks, and dishes. The dinner was topped off with mince and pumpkin pies, in whose favour the guests could not say too much. After dinner a quiet, enjoyable talk was indulged in. Mr. Beecher neglected his Sunday school to entertain the artists. He highly complimented Irving by telling him that he was a born preacher.

"If I were not pastor of Plymouth Church, I would be Henry Irving," said Mr. Beecher.

"You are a born actor," said Mr. Irving. "As for myself, there is no one I feel more inclined to envy than the pastor of Plymouth Church."

Miss Terry was not slighted much in Mr. Beecher's meed of praise. The topics of discussion momentarily changed from America to England and back again, both of the leading gentlemen having well-stored minds that relieved them from "talking shop."

At four o'clock the visitors departed, carrying and leaving delightful impressions.

"Newspapers are not allowed to be noisily hawked in the streets here, I find," said Irving; "and ticket speculators on the sidewalks are also tabooed. A little newsboy offered me a paper yesterday quite confidentially. By the way, you saw the military band belonging to the *Evening Call*. It is composed of the *employés* of the newspaper. It looked like a band of French guides. It serenaded Miss Terry at her hotel yesterday, and afterwards serenaded me at mine. I was just getting up. It quite affected me to hear "God save the Queen" played as finely almost as if the band of her Majesty's Guards were under my window.[2]

[2] "Distinguished Visitors.—The *Evening Call* band of fifty-one pieces and the *Evening Call* flute and drum corps, numbering thirty-five pieces, making a total of eighty-six performers, formed before the Union League building this morning, and proceeded down Broad Street a few yards, to the Hotel Bellevue, and tendered a complimentary serenade to the distinguished

V.

"IRVING in Clover," was the journalistic title of a report of "a notable breakfast given to the English tragedian," which appeared in the *Philadelphia Press*. "A gathering of distinguished men listen to entertaining words by the famous actor; he is presented with the watch of Edwin Forrest."

The "Clover Club" is one of the pleasantest of

English actor, Henry Irving. Several delightful airs, including 'God save the Queen,' were rendered with fine effect. Mr. J. H. Coplestone, Mr. Abbey's manager for Mr. Irving, acknowledged the compliment on behalf of the eminent tragedian. The band then proceeded to the Aldine Hotel, where Miss Ellen Terry, Mr. Irving's leading lady, was serenaded, following which the musicians gave a short street parade. At the conclusion of the serenade Mr. Irving sent the following pleasant little note to the office of the *Evening Call*:—

"'HOTEL BELLEVUE,

"'PHILADELPHIA, 29th November ("Thanksgiving Day"), 1883.

"'*To the Editor of the "Evening Call"*:—

"'MY DEAR SIR,—Upon this day of universal thankfulness allow me to add a personal item. My thanks to you and your magnificent band for the honour done to me this morning by their serenade. I enjoyed the music much, and beg to add my tribute of praise to the worth of your band which, to my mind, is amongst the best I have heard. To hear the strains of the national anthem of my own dear land here, and on such a day, touched me much, and assures me again in a forcible manner of the strength of the affection between the two countries, America and England.

"'Believe me to be, dear sir, yours very faithfully,

"'HENRY IRVING.'"

Evening Call.

Philadelphian institutions. Its reception to Mr. Irving, and the Forrest incident, which makes the day historical in the annals of the stage, call for a special record. As I was travelling at this time to another city, I propose to repeat the chronicle of the local journalist, and Mr. Irving's own personal report of the interesting proceedings. Let me say, then, in the language of the *Press*, that on the morning of December 7th Mr. Irving broke his fast with the club that has a four-leaved Shamrock on which to spread its bounty, *À votre santé* for its toast cry, and for its motto the quatrain,—

> While we live,
> We live in clover;
> When we die,
> We die all over.

The banqueting-room of the Hotel Bellevue, the scene of so many memorable gatherings, and the shrine at which the quadrifoil devotees ever worship, had been turned into a fairy bower. The regular clover table had an addition in the shape of a crescent; spreading on either side from the stem of the club's emblem, and from its centre, and concealing a pillar supporting the floor above, arose what the florist's art made to appear a gigantic plant. Its branches, bearing numerous camellias, reached to the ceiling. At its base, in a bed of emerald moss, grew ferns and

lilies. Smilax (a beautiful American creeper), in graceful windings, covered the entire board, furnishing a radiant green setting for dazzling glass and shining silver, and handsome plaques of flowers and fruits. Directly in front of the president of the club, and the guest of the occasion, was a handsome floral structure, from which the modest clover grew around the name "Henry Irving," composed of radiant blossoms. On the emblematic gridiron was placed the massive "loving-cup." The walls of the room were covered with precious works of art, and over all was shed the mellow light of many wax candles, with their rays subdued by crimson shades. The sunlight, so suggestive of business activity and all that rebukes feasting and frivolity, was rigorously excluded from the scene of pleasure. An English and American flag entwined draped one end of the room.

Breakfast was served shortly at noon, fifty-three gentlemen sitting around the clover-leaf. Around the table, beside Mr. Irving and twenty-three members of the club, were seated the following gentlemen: Ex-Attorney-General MacVeagh; Charles Wyndham, the English comedian; A. Loudon Snowden, Superintendent of the Mint; Charles Godfrey Leland (Hans Breitman); Calvin Wells, of Pittsburg; Captain J. W. Shackford, of the yacht *Atlanta*; Professor E. Coppee Mitchell, of the University; James D. Fish,

President of the Marine National Bank, New York, and owner of the New York Casino; John B. Schoeffel, partner of Henry E. Abbey; Morton McMichael, Jun., cashier of the First National Bank; A. G. Hetherington; J. H. Copleston; James H. Alexander; Commodore James M. Ferguson, President of the Board of Port Wardens; E. A. Perry, of the *Boston Herald;* E. T. Steel, President of the Board of Education; Thomas Hovenden; J. W. Bailey; Marcus Mayer; Peter A. B. Widener; Dr. Alfred C. Lambdin; Henry Howe, the "first old man" of Mr. Irving's company; W. E. Littleton; J. M. White; Hon. Robert P. Porter, of New York; Nathaniel Childs, the comedian; Charles A. Dougherty; J. Beaufoy Lane; and J. H. Palser.

After the "Baby"[3] member, Colonel John A. McCaull, had descended from the high chair and been divested of his rattle, and the loving-cup had been passed around, and the game on the bill of fare had been reached, President M. P. Handy arose, and in a few fitting remarks introduced Mr. Irving, reminding him, in conclusion, that "this unconventionality is our conventionality," and, further, that he was expected "to stir up the animals."

After the warm applause that greeted him had sub-

[3] The youngest member, who is provided with a tall chair, rattle, and other things indicative of his "clover" childhood.

sided, Mr. Irving, in a conversational, unrestrained manner, spoke as follows :—

"Gentlemen,—I can never forget, so long as I live, the hearty welcome you have given me, coupled with such unusual and hearty hospitality. When it was first known that I was coming to Philadelphia, your club extended to me a most kind invitation,—the first invitation I received after my arrival in America, and one that will ever be memorable to me. Your great hospitality, and the gridiron there before me, has reminded me of an old organization of which I am a member—the Beefsteak Club. I hope I shall have the pleasure of welcoming some of the members of this club whenever they cross the water. Should any of them come to London, I will endeavour to make some return for this unexpected welcome. I hope by that time we will have some of your unconventional conventionalities of which you have, in such an excellent manner, given me a specimen. I am told that speech-making is not part of the programme. Therefore I can do no better than follow the suggestion of my friend Dougherty, and give you an experience of my early life. I don't wish to do aught against the rules,—for I am a great stickler for rules,—which I see you carry out ; but I will tell you a little story concerning my early life, or it may possibly be the story of the early life of several of us."

And then Mr. Irving branched off into a recitation

descriptive of how "some vast amount of years ago," a precocious youth—one Tom by name, and but eleven years of age—had a prematurely amorous longing for a spinster of thirty-two, who finally married an elder, but hated, rival. At the conclusion of the recitation, which was received with great laughter, he continued his remarks, as follows:—

"I feel most fondly unto you, O Clovers! Many of you, I believe, are associated with the press. Between journalism and the stage there has always been a great sympathy, and I fancy it will continue so until all things cease to exist. I have often thought that the stage is a sort of father of journalism,—it is a sort of Utopian idea,—but from the days of the Greek drama to the time of Shakespeare there was much news discussed at the theatres, such as we now find in the newspapers. Our interests are mixed. We represent much of the newspaper treasury I know, in England, and I fancy it is the same in this country. We are therefore interested, to a very large amount, in the newspapers, and I have found my friend, Charles Wyndham, whom I am glad to meet at this board, interested to the extent of anxiety concerning some of his large advertisements.

"But this is not solely a gathering of journalists. I have to-day the honour of meeting many gentlemen who represent every class in Philadelphia,—every class of

professional calling. I will say from my very heart that I thank you. I will remember, as long as I live, the courtesy that has supplemented this sumptuous banquet, and your kindness in calling me to meet such representative men. I am living next door to this room, and had I only heard that I was to meet such a distinguished gathering I am afraid I would have been deterred from facing you. Mr. Handy, your president, has told me that your conventionality consists in being unconventional, and I have tried to be as unconventional as I possibly can. I thank you with all my heart."

At the conclusion of Irving's remarks, Secretary Deacon read the following letter from the eminent American tragedian, James E. Murdoch :—

Previous engagements of a domestic kind induce me to send "Regrets," in reply to your invitation to breakfast with the members of the Clover Club and their distinguished guest, Mr. Henry Irving. In regard to certain "effects, defective" consequent upon the "feast of reason and the flow of soul," I am constrained to say, in the language of Cassio [somewhat altered], "I have but a poor and unhappy stomach for feasting." I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with the tempting dishes of mind and matter so bountifully served up at complimentary festivals. I hope it will not be considered out of place for me to state that I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Irving socially, and of witnessing some of his performances. I esteem him as a man of gentle manners, and regard him as a dramatic genius. He appears to me to possess, in an eminent degree, all those qualities of thought and action which marked so strikingly the historical career of Macready and Charles Kean, and which established

the reputation of those gentlemen for consummate skill in stage direction, and for exquisite portraiture of dramatic characters. Desiring to be excused for the obtrusion of my opinion, allow me to add : although I shall not have the pleasure of sitting down to your banquet, I take pleasure in saying :—

"Now, good digestion wait on appetite and health on both—"
. . . "Come, love and health, to all" . . .

I drink to the general joy of the whole table, and especially to the health and happiness of your accomplished and worthy guest.

Yours, always, in the bonds of good-fellowship,
JAMES E. MURDOCH.

The next episode of the memorable occasion was one that almost moved Mr. Irving to tears. It was as great a surprise to many members of the club as it was to the guest of the day. Thomas Donaldson, a well-known Clover, after some remarks concerning the drama, in which he spoke of the United States having 1800 theatres, 20,000 actors and actresses, and spending $40,000,000 for theatrical entertainment, said : "Mr. Irving, I desire to present you with the watch of the greatest genius America ever produced on the mimic stage,—Edwin Forrest." Mr. Irving clasped the relic extended to him and reverently kissed it. He remained on his feet, having impulsively arisen, and in a voice deep with feeling spoke again :—

"You have bereft me of all words. My blood alone can speak for me in my face, and if my heart could tell it would describe to you my gratitude. This recalls so

many memories that you will pardon me if I am not able to express my deep gratitude for this mark of affection. I say affection, for to receive here such a memento of your great country is more than I could have dreamt of. To think that to-day, before so many distinguished Americans, a watch could be given to me that belonged to Edwin Forrest! It recalls a most unfortunate affair; I refer to the *contretemps* between Forrest and my countryman, Macready. That such a tribute should have been offered me shows how changed is your feeling towards art; shows how cosmopolitan art is in all its phases. I shall wear this watch, Mr. Donaldson, close to my heart. It will remind me of you all, and of your city and of your country,—not that I need anything to remind me,—but close to my heart it will remind me of your friendship; and with all my heart I thank you."

As Irving sat down he kissed the watch again, and then placed it in the upper left-hand pocket of his vest. Accompanying the timepiece, which had been Mr. Donaldson's private possession, were papers proving the authenticity of its original ownership.[4]

Ex-Attorney-General MacVeagh was the next

[4] The documentary evidence handed to Irving as establishing the identity of the watch are: (1) a copy of the catalogue of the sale by auction of "the estate of Edwin Forrest, deceased," at Davis and Harvey's Art Galleries, No. 1212, Chestnut Street,

speaker, and he paid a very graceful tribute to foreign theatrical and operatic artists, and the welcome they receive in these days on the shores of America.

Mr. Henry Howe (a leading member of Mr. Irving's company), who, for forty consecutive years, was a member of the Haymarket Theatre company, made a warm defence of Macready anent the Forrest trouble. "I have heard him say," said Mr. Howe, "time and time again, 'Never in my life did I do anything that would prevent me from shaking Forrest by the hand. I appreciate his genius, and that I could ever have been thought mean enough to do anything against him is the

Philadelphia, on Feb. 4, 1883; (2) a copy of the supplementary catalogue of "the personal effects of Edwin Forrest," which sets forth twenty-eight articles, including a silver watch; (3) the auctioneer's receipt for "One silver watch, the property of Edwin Forrest;" and (4) a voucher from Mr. Donaldson, in which he states that, until he presented it to Mr. Irving, the watch had never been out of his possession from the time that he bought it. Mr. Donaldson is a collector of *bric-à-brac*, and possesses many interesting relics of the stage. On Irving's second visit to Philadelphia we called upon him and inspected some of his miscellaneous treasures. They covered a wide range of interest,—antiquarian, geological, historical, artistic, and literary. A white-haired, picturesque-looking old gentleman was there to meet us. "How like Tennyson!" exclaimed Irving. The interesting visitor was Walt Whitman. He expressed great satisfaction on being told that he was well known in England, and, in an amused way, he stood up, that Irving might judge if he was as tall as Tennyson. It is a milder face, and less rugged in its lines, than the face of the great English poet; but, in other respects, suggests the author of "In Memoriam."

greatest misfortune of my life.' And henceforth, gentlemen, I believe you will all be ready to defend this man who has been unjustly assailed."

After many other speeches, songs, and recitations, Irving rose to leave. He said :—

"The welcome you have given me has surpassed my most ideal dream. I cannot describe my feelings. Such generosity, such welcome, such friendship, as I have met with here, no act of mine can repay. I hope to be back here in the early part of the coming year, and I ask if you will not all at that time be my guests. If you will come you will only add to the greatness of my obligation."

As Irving left the room he passed around the table and shook hands warmly with each gentleman present. The breakfast party did not arise until five o'clock. Among those, other than the gentlemen mentioned, who contributed to the pleasure of the occasion, by speech, song, or recitation, were Dr. Edward Bedloe, Rufus E. Shapley, John B. Schoeffel, A. Loudon Snowden, Hon. Robert P. Porter, A. G. Hetherington, British Consul Clipperton, and Nat. Childs. At the latter part of the festivities Attorney-General Brewster entered the room and expressed his regrets that he had been unable to be present in time to shake hands with the Clover guest, and add his own to the club's welcome of England's leading actor.

X.

BOSTON AND SHYLOCK.

Rural Scenes on both Sides of the Atlantic—First Impressions of Railway Travel—The Cars—One of the largest Theatres in America—The Drama in Boston—Early Struggles to represent Plays in Public—"Moral Lectures"—Boston Criticisms—Shylock, Portia, Hamlet, and Ophelia—Different Readings of Shylock—Dressing-room Criticism—Shylock considered—A Reminiscence of Tunis—How Shakespeare should be interpreted on the Stage—Two Methods illustrated—Shylock before the Court of Venice—How Actors should be judged.

I.

Nothing in America is so unlike England as the desolate appearance of the meadows in the autumn and early winter months. From New York to Boston, a journey of six hours, in the second week of December, not a blade of green grass was to be seen. The train ran through a wilderness of brown, burnt-up meadows. With a tinge of yellow in the colour of them, they would have resembled the corn-stubbles of an English landscape. But all were a dead, sombre

brown, except once in a way, where a clump of oaks still waved their russet leaves. Another noticeable contrast to England is the wooden houses, that look so temporary as compared with the brick and stone of the old country. The absence of the trim gardens of English rural districts also strikes a stranger, as do the curious and ragged fences that take the place of the English hedge-rows. The New England homesteads are, however, more like those of old England than are the farms of other States in the Union.

The habit of letting out walls and buildings, roofs of barns, and sides of houses, for the black and white advertisements of quack-medicine vendors and others, is a disfigurement of the land which every English visitor notices with regret; and lovers of the picturesque, Americans and English, grow positively angry over the disfigurement of the Hudson by these money-making Goths and Vandals.

A change of scene was promised for the Irving travellers on their return to New York, over the same line. A cold wave from the West was predicted. "We shall have snow before long," said an American friend, "and not unlikely a hard winter. I judge so from the fact that all the great weather prophets say it will be a mild one. Your Canadian seer, for instance, is dead on an exceptionally calm and warm winter. So let us look out."

Boston delighted the members of Irving's company; all of them except Loveday, who contracted, on the way thither, an attack of malarial fever. With true British pluck he fought his assailant until his first spell of important work was over, and then he retreated. Medical assistance, rest, and plenty of quinine pulled him through. But the company were destined later to sustain other climatic shocks; and they all, more or less, had a dread of the threatened winter. Until Loveday broke down everybody had stood the change of climate well. Reports came from England that Miss Ellen Terry was ill in New York. On the contrary, she had never been better than during these first weeks of the tour. She suffered, as all English women do, from heated rooms. "That is my only fear," she said to me. "The climate!—I don't object to it. If they would only be content with it, I would. Some of the days are gorgeous. The snap of cold, as they call it, was delightful to me. But when I would be driving out in open carriages, New York ladies would be muffled up in close broughams. And, oh, the getting home again!—to the hotel, I mean. An English hothouse, where they grow pine-apples—that is the only comparison I can think of. And their private houses! How the dear people can stand the overwhelming heat of them, I don't know!"

The railway journey from Philadelphia to Boston was Irving's first experience of American travel.

"It is splendid," he said, when I met him at his hotel, on the night of his arrival. "Am I not tired? Not a bit. It has been a delightful rest. I slept nearly the whole way, except once when going to the platform and looking out. At a station a man asked me which was Irving, and I pointed to Mead, who had been walking along the track, and was just then getting into his car. No; I enjoyed the ride all the way; never slept better; feel quite refreshed."

Said Miss Terry the next morning, when I saw her at the Tremont House, "Oh, yes, I like the travelling! It did not tire me. Then we had such lovely cars! But how different the stations are compared with ours! No platforms!—you get down really upon the line. And how unfinished it all looks,—except the cars, and they are perfect. Oh, yes, the parlour car beats our first-class carriage. I shall like Boston very much—though I never expect to like any place as well as New York."

II.

The Boston Theatre is the largest of the houses in which Irving has played on this side of the Atlantic. It is claimed that it is the largest in the Union, though many persons say that the Opera House at the Rocky Mountain city of Denver is the handsomest of all the American theatres. The main entrance to the Boston house is in Washington Street. It has not an imposing

exterior. The front entrance is all that is visible, the rest being filled up with stores; but the hall is very spacious, and the vestibule, *foyer*, lobbies, and grand staircase beyond, are worthy of the broad and well-appointed auditorium. The promenade saloon is paved with marble, and is forty-six feet by twenty-six feet, and proportionately high. Upon the walls, and here and there on easels, are portraits of Irving, Booth, McCullough, Salvini, and other notable persons. The promenade and entrance hall cover one hundred feet from the doors to the auditorium, which, in its turn, is ninety feet from the back row to the footlights. The stage is one hundred feet wide and ninety feet deep; and the interior of the house from front to back covers three hundred feet, the average width being about one hundred feet. In addition to the parquette, which occupies the entire floor (as the stalls do at the English Opera Comique, and, by a recent change, also at the Haymarket), there are three balconies, severally known as the dress circle, the family circle, and the gallery. The house will seat three thousand people. It is built on a series of arches, or supporting columns, leaving the basement quite open, giving, so far as the stage is concerned, great facilities for the manipulation of scenery and for storage, and allowing space for offices, drill-rooms for supers, and other purposes.

"It is a magnificent theatre," said Irving; "the

auditorium superb, the stage fine; the pitch of the auditorium in harmony with the stage—by which I mean there is an artistic view of the stage from every seat; the gas managements are perfect, and the system of general ventilation unique; but the dressing-rooms are small and inconvenient. For anything like quiet acting, for work in which detail of facial expression, significant gesture, or delicate asides, are important, the theatre is too large."

"Are you acquainted with the history of the stage in Boston?" I asked him, "or of this theatre in particular?"

"Only from what I have read or heard in a cursory way," he said; "but one can readily understand that our Puritan ancestors would bring with them to these shores their hatred of plays and players. The actors persevered in their terrible occupation in New England, notwithstanding a local ordinance to prevent stage plays and other theatrical entertainments, passed in 1750. Otway's 'Orphan' was, I am told, the first piece done in Boston. It was played at the British Coffee-house, 'by a company of gentlemen,' and this gave rise to the passing of the Act in question. Some five or ten years later a number of Tories got up an association to promote acting and defy this statute. They revolted in favour of art; and in these days of political tolerance that is a good thing to remember.

The members of this society were chiefly British officers, who, with their subalterns and private soldiers formed the acting company. I believe one of them wrote the first piece they attempted to give in public. It was called 'The Blockade of Boston;' but the entertainment was stopped by a *ruse*—a sudden report that fighting had begun at Charlestown; a call to arms, in fact. For many years no more efforts were made to amuse or instruct the people with semi-theatrical entertainments or stage plays. The next attempt was a theatre, or, more properly speaking, a variety show, in disguise. The house was called 'The New Exhibition Room,' and the entertainment was announced as 'a moral lecture.' One Joseph Harper was the manager. The programme of the first night included tight-rope dancing, and various other athletic feats; 'an introductory address;' singing, by a Mr. Woods; tumbling, by Mr. Placide; and, in the course of the evening, 'will be delivered the Gallery of Portraits; or, the World as it Goes, by Mr. Harper.' Later, 'Venice Preserved' was announced as a moral lecture, 'in which the dreadful effects of conspiracy will be exemplified.' Mr. Clapp's book on Boston contains several curious instances of this kind. Shakespeare, it seems, filled the stage as 'a moral lecturer;' and a familiar old English drama was played as 'a moral lecture, in five parts, wherein the pernicious

tendency of libertinism will be exemplified in the tragical history of George Barnwell; or, the London Merchant.' Eventually, in the year 1793, I think, or thereabouts, Harper was arrested on the stage while playing Richard in one of Shakespeare's moral illustrations of the bane of ambition and the triumph of virtue over vice. The audience protested, and destroyed a portrait of the governor of the city, which hung over the stage-box. They also tore down the State arms, and trampled upon them. At the hearing of the charge against Harper a technical flaw in the indictment procured his discharge. After this, however, the 'Exhibition Room' did not flourish; but a bold and earnest movement, a year or two later, resulted in the building of the Federal Street Theatre, sometimes also called the Boston, and sometimes Old Drury, after the London house. From this time the stage in Boston is a fact; and one feels at home in reading over the names of the actors who have been well known here,—Macready, Charles Kemble and Fanny Kemble, Charlotte Cushman, Ellen Tree, John Vandenhoff, Sheridan Knowles, John Gilbert, Fanny Ellsler, the Booths, our friend Warren, and others. The present theatre, the Boston,[1] in which we are

[1] "The Boston was built in 1854 by a stock company. It was opened on the 11th of September in that year, under the management of the late Thomas Barry, and for some time was

acting, has been built about thirty years. The grand ball given to the Prince of Wales when he visited this country took place here, the auditorium being boarded for the occasion."

III.

"THE audience" on the first night of Irving's appearance in Boston, said the *Post* on the following morning, "was not made up of average theatre-goers; many regular 'first-nighters' were there, but a very large majority of those present were people of wealth, who go to the theatre comparatively little."[2] The play

in the hands of Junius Brutus Booth. After a time the company gave up the theatre, and it was acquired by Messrs. Thayer and Tompkins. On the death of Mr. Thayer, Mr. Tompkins associated with himself Mr. Hill, who had been a prominent stockholder, and they have since continued as proprietors. Mr. Eugene Tompkins, son of the chief proprietor, is the general manager."—*King's Boston.*

[2] "Mr. Oliver Ditson, General Blackmar and party, Mr. Joseph Thorpe, and Mrs. Ole Bull. In the body of the house were seen General Devens, Colonel Henry Lee, Mr. J. R. Osgood, Colonel Fairchild, Mr. T. B. Aldrich, Mr. Boyle O'Reilly, Mr. Robert Treat Paine, Professor Pierce, of Cambridge, Mr. S. H. Russell, Mr. Charles F. Sherwin, Mr. Thomas G. Appleton, Mr. Hamilton Wild, Mr. B. C. Porter, ex-Mayor Green, Colonel W. V. Hutchins, General Whittier, Mr. A. V. G. Anthony, Mr. Arthur Dexter, Mr. George H. Chickering, Mr. Curtis Guild, Colonel H. G. Parker, Hon. R. M. Morse, Jun., Mr. H. M. Ticknor, Colonel W. W. Clapp, Mr. Martin Brimmer, Signor Ventura, Mr. T. R. Sullivan, Mr. Higginson, Mr. Hemenway, Mr. Matt. Luce, Hon. W. D. Davis, of Plymouth, Mr. George Riddle,

was "Louis XI." It excited expressions of admiration in the audience, and was as warmly praised in the press as at New York and Philadelphia. A fine theatre, the scenery appeared almost to greater advantage than in the Lyceum itself; and some of the readers of these pages will be surprised to learn that much of the original scenery was dispensed with. Portions of the sets, indeed, for all the pieces during the week, were painted on the spot by Mr. Hall (a clever young artist, who is devoted to the service of Mr. Irving), and Lyceum draperies, groupings, dresses, and stage manipulation, did the rest. The usual orchestra of the theatre was strengthened, as at New York and Philadelphia, and the conductor had the satisfaction of a call for the repetition of some of the *entr'acte* music.

Among the most remarkable tributes to Irving's genius as an actor are the critical notices that appeared in the Boston newspapers the next day; while the people of Boston gave practical evidence of their satisfaction

Mr. Henry M. Rogers, Mr. Edes, Mr. Ellerton Pratt, Mr. Arthur Dodd, Mr. Alanson Bigelow, and many others of eminent social, literary, and artistic position. William Warren, with many professionals, was present, while, of course, Mr. Henry E. Abbey and his staff, as well as city managers and theatre folk, were represented. Most of the gentlemen who attended were accompanied by ladies, and the house, as seen from the stage, presented a very brilliant appearance."—*The Globe.*

by attending the theatre in increasing numbers every night. The fortnight's work included, besides the opening play, "The Merchant of Venice," "The Lyons Mail," "Charles I.," "The Bells," "The Belle's Stratagem," and "Hamlet." The old controversies as to the characters of Hamlet and Shylock, and the interpretation of them, cropped up in the press, and, as before, were entirely absent from the audiences. They evidently had no doubts; they showed no desire to discount their pleasure; they found themselves wrapped up in the stage stories, rejoicing, sorrowing, weeping, laughing, with the varying moods of poet and actor. They did not stop to analyze the reasons for their emotion; it was enough for them that they followed the fortunes of the hero and heroine with absorbing interest. They had no preconceived ideas to vindicate; they were happy in the enjoyment of the highest form of dramatic entertainment which even those critics that are chary of their commendation of individual artists say America has ever seen. Said the *Boston Herald*, in its notice of "Hamlet":—

"At the end of each act he received one or more calls before the curtain, and after the 'play scene' the demonstrations were really enthusiastic; shouts of 'Bravo!' mingling with the plaudits that summoned him to the footlights again and again. Miss Ellen Terry won all hearts by her exquisite embodiment of Ophelia. A better representative of this lovely character has not been, and is not likely to be, seen here by the present

generation of play-goers. She received her full share of the honours of the evening, and her appearance before the curtain was often demanded, and hailed with delight, by the large audience present."

The *Advertiser, Traveller, Globe, Post,*—indeed all the Boston daily press,—were unanimous in recognizing the merits of Irving and his work. The *Transcript* was especially eulogistic in its treatment of Hamlet. As a rule the criticisms were written with excellent literary point. It will be interesting to give two brief examples of this, one from the *Traveller* :—

"Of Mr. Irving's performance of the part we can truthfully say that, while differing almost entirely from that of nearly every actor that we have seen in Hamlet, it abounded in beauties, in new conceptions of business, in new ideas of situation. It was scholarly and thoughtful, princely and dignified, tender yet passionate, revengeful yet human, filial yet manly. The Ophelia of Miss Ellen Terry was supremely delicious. In the early parts it was artless and girlish, yet womanly withal. It was sweet, tender, graceful, loving, and lovable. As a piece of acting, it was 'stuff'd with all honourable virtues.' It was very powerful in the mad scene in the fourth act, and yet it was not more powerful than it was refined and intellectual; and while it may be looked upon in every respect as a perfect piece of dramatic art, it was yet faithful to life and true to the best instincts of womanly nature."

And another from the *Transcript* :—

"Last evening we found ourselves uncontrollably forced to admiration and enthusiasm. He manages by some magic to get the full meaning of almost every sentence, and the emphasis always falls upon the right word; withal, he has this great and rare merit, that whatever he says does not sound like a speech

committed to memory beforehand. He always seems to be talking, and not declaiming. He made Hamlet more of a convincing reality to us than any actor we can remember. The greatness, the intellectual and the ethical force, above all, the charm and lovableness of the man, were shown as we have never seen them before. Miss Terry's Ophelia is a revelation of poetic beauty. Here one has nothing to criticize, no one trait to praise more than another. Such a wonderful embodiment of the poet's conception is quickly praised, but never to be forgotten."

III.

On the first night of the "Merchant of Venice" at Boston, Irving played Shylock, I think, with more than ordinary thoughtfulness in regard to his original treatment of the part. His New York method was, to me, a little more vigorous than his London rendering of the part. Considerations of the emphasis which actors have laid upon certain scenes that are considered as especially favourable to the declamatory methods possibly influenced him. His very marked success in Louis no doubt led some of his admirers in America to expect in his Shylock a very hard, grim, and cruel Jew. Many persons hinted as much to him before they saw his impersonation of this much-discussed character. At Boston I thought he was, if possible, over-conscientious in traversing the lines he laid down for himself when he first decided to produce the "Merchant" at the Lyceum. Singularly sensitive about the feelings of his audiences, and accustomed to judge them as keenly as they judge him, he fancied

the Boston audience, which had been very enthusiastic in their applause on the previous nights, were not stirred as they had been by his other work in response to his efforts as Shylock. The play, nevertheless, was received with the utmost cordiality, and the general representation of it was admirable. I found a Londoner in front, who was in raptures with it. "I think the carnival, Belmont, and court scenes," he said, "were never better done at the Lyceum."

At the close of the piece, and after a double call for Irving and Miss Terry, I went to his dressing-room.

"Yes," he said, "the play has gone well, very well, indeed; but the audience were not altogether with me. I always feel, in regard to this play, that they do not quite understand what I am doing. They only responded at all to-night where Shylock's rage and mortification get the better of his dignity."

"They are accustomed to have the part of Shylock strongly declaimed; indeed, all the English Shylocks, as well as American representatives of the part, are very demonstrative in it. Phelps was, so was Charles Kean; and I think American audiences look for the declamatory passages in Shylock, to compare your rendering of them with the readings they have previously heard. You omit much of what is considered great business in Shylock, and American audiences are probably a little disappointed that your

view of the part forbids anything like what may be called the strident characteristics of most other Shylocks. Charles Kean ranted considerably in Shylock, and Phelps was decidedly noisy,—both fine, no doubt, in their way. Nevertheless they made the Jew a cruel butcher of a Jew. They filled the stage with his sordid greed and malignant desire for vengeance on the Christian, from his first entrance to his final exit."

"I never saw Kean's Shylock, nor Phelps's, nor, indeed, any one's. But I am sure Shylock was not a low person; a miser and usurer, certainly, but a very injured man,—at least he thought so. I felt that my audience to-night had quite a different opinion, and I once wished the house had been composed entirely of Jews. I would like to play Shylock to a Jewish audience."

Mr. Warren,[3] the famous Boston comedian, came into

[3] As the position which Mr. John Gilbert holds in New York is akin to that which the elder Farren held in London, so the position which Mr. William Warren occupies in Boston is akin to that which Mr. Buckstone ("Bucky," as his particular friends called him) held in the English metropolis. Mr. Warren's Dogberry and Paul Pry are among the pleasantest reminiscences of Boston play-goers. It fell to Irving's lot to meet Mr. Warren frequently, and perhaps no actor ever received greater compliments from two veterans of his craft than Irving received from Gilbert and Warren. While the favourite of New York never missed an Irving performance at the Star Theatre, his famous contemporary of Boston not only attended all the Lyceum performances at Boston, but later, when Irving went to Chicago,

the dressing-room while we were talking. He has been a favourite here for thirty-six years.

"Not so long in one place as Mr. Howe," he says, with a smile, "who tells me he was a member of the Haymarket company for forty years."

"You know Mr. Toole well?" said Mr. Irving.

"Yes," he replied; "it was a pleasure to meet him here."

"He often talks of you."

"I am glad to know it," he replied; "I want to tell you how delighted I have been to-night. It is the 'Merchant of Venice' for the first time. I have never seen the casket scene played before, nor the last act for twenty years. A great audience, and how thoroughly they enjoyed the piece I need not tell you."

"I don't think they cared for me," said Irving.

"Yes, yes, I am sure they did," Mr. Warren replied, at which moment an usher brought Miss Terry, to be introduced to him, and the subject dropped, to be revived over a quiet cigar after supper.

"I look on Shylock," says Irving, in response to an invitation to talk about his work in that direction, "as the type of a persecuted race; almost the only gentleman in the play, and most ill-used. He is a merchant,

Mr. Warren paid his relatives a visit in the western city, and was as constant an attendant at Haverly's during the Irving engagement as he was at the Boston Theatre.

who trades in the Rialto, and Bassanio and Antonio are not ashamed to borrow money of him, nor to carry off his daughter. The position of his child is, more or less, a key to his own. She is the friend of Portia. Shylock was well-to-do—a Bible-read man, as his readiness at quotation shows; and there is nothing in his language, at any time, that indicates the snuffling usurer which some persons regard him, and certainly nothing to justify the use the early actors made of the part for the low comedian. He was a religious Jew; learned, for he conducted his case with masterly skilfulness, and his speech is always lofty and full of dignity. Is there a finer language in Shakespeare than Shylock's defence of his race? 'Hath not a Jew eyes; hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food; hurt with the same weapons; subject to the same diseases; healed by the same means; warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is?' As to the manner of representing Shylock, take the first part of the story; note his moods. He is, to begin with, quiet, dignified, diplomatic; then satirical; and next, somewhat light and airy in his manner, with a touch of hypocrisy in it. Shakespeare does not indicate at what precise moment Shylock conceives the idea of the bond; but he himself tells us of his anxiety to have Antonio on the hip.

> "'I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
> He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,
> Even there where merchants most do congregate,
> On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,
> Which he calls interest.'

"His first word is more or less fawning; but it breaks out into reproach and satire when he recalls the insults that have been heaped upon him. 'Hath a dog money?' and so on; still he is diplomatic, for he wants to make reprisals upon Antonio: 'Cursed be my tribe if I forgive him!' He is plausible, even jocular. He speaks of his bond of blood as a merry sport. Do you think if he were strident or spiteful in his manner here, loud of voice, bitter, they would consent to sign a bond having in it such fatal possibilities? One of the interesting things for an actor to do is to try to show when Shylock is inspired with the idea of this bargain, and to work out by impersonation the Jew's thought in his actions. My view is, that from the moment Antonio turns upon him, declaring he is 'like to spit upon him again,' and invites him scornfully to lend the money, not as to his friend, but rather to his enemy, who, if he break, he may with better force exact the penalty,—from that moment I imagine Shylock resolving to propose his pound of flesh, perhaps without any hope of getting it. Then he puts on that hypocritical show of pleasantry which so far deceives them as to elicit from Antonio the

remark that 'The Hebrew will turn Christian; he grows kind.' Well, the bond is to be sealed, and when next we meet the Jew he is still brooding over his wrongs, and there is in his words a constant, though vague, suggestion of a desire for revenge, nothing definite or planned, but a continual sense of undeserved humiliation and persecution :—

> "'I am bid forth to supper, Jessica.
> There are my keys :—but wherefore should I go?
> I am not bid for love; they flatter me:
> But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
> The prodigal Christian.'

"But one would have to write a book to go into these details, and tell an actor's story of Shylock."

"We are not writing a book of Shylock now, but only chatting about your purpose and intention generally in presenting to the public what is literally to them a new Shylock, and answering, perhaps, a few points of that conservative kind of criticism which preaches tradition and custom. Come to the next phase of Shylock's character, or, let us say, his next dramatic mood."

"Well, we get at it in the street scene: rage,—a confused passion; a passion of rage and disappointment, never so confused and mixed; a man beside himself with vexation and chagrin.

> "'My daughter! Oh, my ducats! Oh, my daughter!
> Fled with a Christian! Oh, my Christian ducats!
> Justice! the law! my ducats and my daughter!'

"I saw a Jew once, in Tunis, tear his hair and raiment, fling himself in the sand, and writhe in a rage, about a question of money,—beside himself with passion. I saw him again, self-possessed and fawning; and again, expressing real gratitude for a trifling money courtesy. He was never undignified until he tore at his hair and flung himself down, and then he was picturesque; he was old, but erect, even stately, and full of resource. As he walked behind his team of mules he carried himself with the lofty air of a king. He was a Spanish Jew,—Shylock probably was of Frankfort; but Shakespeare's Jew was a type, not a mere individual: he was a type of the great, grand race,—not a mere Hounsditch usurer. He was a man famous on the Rialto; probably a foremost man in his synagogue—proud of his descent—conscious of his moral superiority to many of the Christians who scoffed at him, and fanatic enough, as a religionist, to believe that his vengeance had in it the element of a godlike justice. Now, you say that some of my critics evidently look for more fire in the delivery of the speeches to Solanio, and I have heard friends say that John Kemble and the Keans brought down the house for the way they thundered out the threats against Antonio, and the defence of the Jewish race. It is in this scene that we realize, for the first time, that Shylock has resolved to enforce his bond. Three

times, during a very short speech, he says, 'Let him look to his bond!' 'A beggar that was used to come so smug upon the mart; *let him look to his bond:* he was wont to call me usurer; *let him look to his bond;* he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; *let him look to his bond.*' Now, even an ordinary man, who had made up his mind to 'have the heart of him if he forfeit,' would not shout and rave and storm. My friend at Tunis tore his hair at a trifling disappointment; if he had resolved to stab his rival he would have muttered his intention between his teeth, not have screeched it. How much less likely still would this bitterly persecuted Jew merchant of Venice have given his resolve a loud and noisy utterance! Would not his settled hate have been more likely to show itself in the clinched hand, the firmly planted foot, the flashing eye, and the deep undertones in which he would utter the closing threat: '*Let him look to his bond*'? I think so."

"And so do the most thoughtful among your audiences. Now and then, however, a critic shows himself so deeply concerned for what is called tradition that he feels it incumbent upon him to protest against a Shylock who is not, from first to last, a transparent and noisy ruffian."

"Tradition! One day we will talk of that. In Davenant's time—and some dare to say he got

his tradition from Shakespeare himself—they played Shylock as a comic character, in a red wig; and to make it, as they thought, consistent, they cut out the noblest lines the author had put into his mouth, and added some of their own. We have no tradition in the sense that those who would insist upon our observance of it means; what we have is bad,—Garrick played Othello in a red coat and epaulettes; and if we are to go back to Shakespeare's days, these sticklers for so-called tradition forget that the women were played by boys. Shakespeare did the best he could in his day, and he would do the best he could if he were living now. Tradition! It is enough to make one sick to hear the pretentious nonsense that is talked about the stage in the name of tradition! It seems to me that there are two ways of representing Shakespeare. You have seen David's picture of Napoleon and that by De la Roche. The first is a heroic figure,—head thrown back, arm extended, cloak flying,—on a white horse of the most powerful, but unreal, character, which is rearing up almost upon its haunches, its forelegs pawing the air. That is Napoleon crossing the Alps. I think there is lightning in the clouds. It is a picture calculated to terrify; a something so unearthly in its suggestion of physical power as to cut it off from human comprehension. Now, this represents to me one way of playing

Shakespeare. The other picture is still the same subject, 'Napoleon crossing the Alps;' but in this one we see a reflective, deep-browed man, enveloped in his cloak, and sitting upon a sturdy mule, which, with a sure and steady foot, is climbing the mountain, led by a peasant guide. This picture represents to me the other way of playing Shakespeare. The question is, which is right? I think the truer picture is *the right* cue to the poet who himself described the actor's art as to hold, as it were, the mirror up to nature."

"Which should bring us very naturally back to Shylock. Let us return to your brief dissertation at the point where he is meditating vengeance in case of forfeiture of the bond."

"Well, the latest mood of Shylock dates from this time,—it is one of implacable *revenge*. Nothing shakes him. He thanks God for Antonio's ill-luck. There is in this darkness of his mind a tender recollection of Leah. And then the calm command to Tubal, 'Bespeak me an officer.' What is a little odd is his request that Tubal shall meet him at the synagogue. It might be that Shakespeare suggested here the idea of a certain sacredness of justice in Shylock's view of vengeance on Antonio. Or it might be to accentuate the religious character of the Jew's habits; for Shylock was assuredly a religious Jew, strict in his worship, and deeply read in his Bible,—no small thing, this

latter knowledge, in those days. I think this idea of something divine in his act of vengeance is the key-note to the trial scene, coupled, of course, with the intense provocation he has received.

> "'Thou calledst me dog before thou hadst a cause;
> But since I am a dog, beware my fangs!
> The duke shall grant me justice.
> . . . . Follow not,
> I'll have no speaking; I will have my bond.'

"These are the words of a man of fixed, implacable purpose, and his skilful defence of it shows him to be wise and capable. He is the most self-possessed man in the court. Even the duke, in the judge's seat, is moved by the situation. What does he say to Antonio?

> "'I am sorry for thee; thou art come to answer
> A stony adversary.'

"Everything indicates a stern, firm, persistent, implacable purpose, which in all our experience of men is, as a rule, accompanied by an apparently calm manner. A man's passion which unpacks itself in oaths and threats, which stamps and swears and shouts, may go out in tears, but not in vengeance. On the other hand, there are those who argue that Antonio's reference to his own patience and to Shylock's fury implies a noisy passion on the part of the Jew; but, without taking advantage of any question as to the meaning of

'fury' in this connection, it seems to me that Shylock's contempt for his enemies, his sneer at Gratiano,—

> "'Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
> Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud'—

and his action throughout the court scene quite outweigh any argument in favour of a very demonstrative and furious representation of the part. 'I stand here for law!' Then note when he realizes the force of the technical flaws in his bond,—and there are lawyers who contend the law was severely and unconstitutionally strained in this decision of the court,—he is willing to take his bond paid thrice; he cannot get that, he asks for the principal; when that is refused he loses his temper, as it occurs to me, for the first time during the trial, and in a rage exclaims, 'Why, then, the devil give him good of it!' There is a peculiar and special touch at the end of that scene which, I think, is intended to mark and accentuate the crushing nature of the blow which has fallen upon him. When Antonio stipulates that Shylock shall become a Christian, and record a deed of gift to Lorenzo, the Jew cannot speak. 'He shall do this,' says the duke, 'or else I do recant the pardon.' Portia turns and questions him. He is hardly able to utter a word. 'I am content,' is all he says; and what follows is as plain an instruction as was ever written in regard to the conduct and manner of the Jew. 'Clerk, draw a deed of gift,'

says Portia. Note Shylock's reply, his last words, the answer of the defeated litigant, who is utterly crushed and borne down :—

> "'I pray you give me leave to go from hence;
> I am not well; send the deed after me,
> And I will sign it.'

"Is it possible to imagine anything more helpless than this final condition of the Jew? 'I am not well; give me leave to go from hence!' How interesting it is to think this out: and how much we all learn from the actors when, to the best of their ability, they give the characters they assume as if they were really present, working out their studies, in their own way, and endowing them with the characterization of their own individuality! It is cruel to insist that one actor shall simply follow in the footsteps of another; and it is unfair to judge an actor's interpretation of a character from the standpoint of another actor; his intention should be considered, and he should be judged from the point of how he succeeds or fails in carrying it out."

XI.

A CITY OF SLEIGHS.

Snow and Sleigh-bells—"Brooks of Sheffield"—In the Boston Suburbs—Smokeless Coal—At the Somerset Club—Miss Ellen Terry and the Papyrus—A Ladies' Night—Club Literature—Curious Minutes—"Greeting to Ellen Terry"—St. Botolph—Oliver Wendell Holmes and Charles the First—"Good-bye and a Merry Christmas."

I.

"A TRANSFORMATION scene, indeed!" said Irving. "Yesterday, autumn winds, bright streets, a rattle of traffic — to-day, snow and sleigh-bells — yesterday, wheels—to-day, runners, as they call the enormous skating-irons upon which they appear to have placed every vehicle in the city. I have just returned from rehearsal, and find everybody sleighing. The omnibuses are sleighs—the grocer's cart is a sleigh—the express waggons are sleighs—it is a city of sleighs! The snow began to fall in earnest yesterday. Last night it must have been a foot deep. It would have

ruined the business at a London theatre. Here it made no difference. We had a splendid house."

"As I walked to my hotel at midnight," I replied, "snow-ploughs were in the streets clearing the roads and scouring the car-tracks. Boston tackles the snow in earnest. The trees on the Common were a marvel of beauty. They looked like an orchard of the Hesperides, all in blossom, and the electric lamps added to the fairy-like beauty of the scene."

"A lovely city. Shall we take a sleigh ride?"

"'Why, certainly,' as they say in 'The Colonel,' but rarely in America."

Irving rings for his coloured attendant. He has discovered that his surname is Brooks, and takes a curious pleasure in addressing him as Brooks, sometimes as "Brooks, of Sheffield!"

"Order me a sleigh, Brooks!"

"Yes, sah," says Brooks, grinning.

"Two horses, Brooks!"

"Yes, sah," says the attendant, preparing to go, not hurriedly, for who ever saw a coloured gentleman (they are all coloured gentlemen) in a hurry?

"And take my rugs down!"

"Yes, sah," he says, marching slowly into the next room for the rugs.

"And, Brooks—"

"Yes, sah."

"Would you like to go to the theatre one night?"

"Berry much, sah—yes, sah."

"What play would you like to see?"

"Hamlet, sah!"

"Hamlet! Very good. Is there a Mrs. Brooks?"

"'Deed there is, sah," answers the darkey, grinning from ear to ear.

"And some little Brookses—of Sheffield?"

"Yes, sah; not ob Sheffield, ob Boston."

"That's all right. Mr. Stoker shall give all of you seats. See if he is in the hotel."

"Yes, sah."

As he stalks to the door Stoker comes bounding in (Stoker is always on the run), to the discomfiture of Brooks and his load of rugs.

Brooks picks himself up with dignity. Stoker assures his chief that there is not a seat in the house for anybody.

"Then buy some for Brooks," says Irving.

"Where?" asks Stoker, in amazement.

"Anywhere," says Irving, adding, with a significant glance at me, "from the speculators."

"Oh, very well, if you wish it," says Stoker.

"And, Brooks—"

"Yes, sah."

"Anybody else in the hotel like to go?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, sah," says Brooks—"de cook, sah."

"And what play would the cook like to see?"

"Hamlet, sah."

"You've been paid to say this!" says Irving, quoting from Louis. "Who bade you do it?"

But this was only whispered in a humorous "aside" for me, who know how much he likes Hamlet, and how much he likes other people to like Hamlet.

At the door of the Brunswick we find a sleigh, pair of horses, smart-looking driver, a heap of rugs and furs, under which we ensconce ourselves. The weather is bitterly cold, the sky blue; the windows of the houses in the fine streets of the Back Bay district flash icily; the air is sharp, and the sleigh-bells ring out aggressively as the horses go away.

The snow is too deep for rapid sleighing; there has been no time for it to solidify. It is white and pure as it has fallen, and when we get out into the suburbs it is dazzling to the eyes, almost painful. Crossing the Charles river the scene is singularly picturesque; a cumbersome old barge in the foreground; on the opposite shore a long stretch of red-brick buildings, vanishing at the point where the heights of Brookline climb away, in white and green and grey undulations, to the bright blue sky. As we enter Cambridge there are fir-trees growing out of the snow, their sombre greens all the darker for the white weight that bows their branches down to the drifts that wrap their

trunks high up; for here and there the snow has drifted until there are banks of it five and six feet deep.

"Very pretty, these villas; nearly all wood,—do you notice?—very comfortable, I am sure; lined with brick, I am told, some of them. Nearly all have balconies or verandahs; and there are trees and gardens everywhere,—must be lovely in summer; good enough now, for that matter. One thing makes them look a trifle lonely,—no smoke coming from the chimneys. They burn anthracite coal,—good for this atmosphere,—excellent and clean; but how a bit of blue smoke curling up among the trees finishes and gives poetry to a landscape,—suggests home and cosey firesides, eh?"

"Yes. New York owes some of its clear atmosphere to its smokeless coal."

"What a pity we don't have it in London! Only fancy a smokeless London,—what a lovely city?"

"It may come about one day, either by the adoption of smokeless coal or the interposition of the electrician. Last summer I spent some time in the Swansea Valley, England, not far from Craig-y-nos, the British home of Patti. One day I noticed that there was no smoke over the villages; none at some local ironworks, except occasional bursts of white steam from the engine-houses; nothing to blemish the lovely sky

that touched the mountain-tops with a grey mist. I was near Ynyscedwyn, the famous smokeless-coal district of South Wales. London need not burn another ounce of soft or bituminous coal; there is enough anthracite in Wales to supply all England for a thousand years."

"What a blessing it would be if London were to use nothing else!"

Through Cambridge, so intimately associated with Longfellow, past its famous colleges, we skirted Brookline, and returned to our head-quarters in Clarendon Street, meeting on the way many stylish sleighs and gay driving-parties.

On another day Irving took luncheon with a little party of undergraduates in Common Hall, was received by the president of the college, inspected the gymnasium, saw the theatre, and had long talks with several of the professors.

Perhaps from a literary and artistic standpoint the most interesting social event among the many entertainments given to Irving was a dinner given by Mr. Charles Fairchild and Mr. James R. Osgood, at the Somerset Club. The company included Messrs. T. B. Aldrich, A. V. S. Anthony, Francis Bartlett, William Bliss, George Baty Blake, S. L. Clemens ("Mark Twain"), T. L. Higginson, W. D. Howells, Laurence Hutton, W. M. Laffan, Francis A. Walker,

George E. Waring, and William Warren. After dinner the conversation was quite as brilliant as the company. Mark Twain told some of his best stories in his best manner. Mr. Howells and Mr. Aldrich in no wise fell short of their reputations as conversationalists. There were no drinking of toasts, no formal speeches, which enhanced the general joy of the whole company.

Driving homewards along the Common, Irving said, "By gaslight, and in the snow, is not this a little like the Green Park, with, yonder, the clock-tower of the Houses of Parliament?"

"Do you wish it were?"

"I wouldn't mind it for an hour or two, eh? Although one really sometimes hardly feels that one is out of London."

II.

"Ladies' Night.—The Papyrus Club request the pleasure of the company of Miss Ellen Terry at the Revere House, December 15th, at six o'clock. Boston, 1883. Please reply to J. T. Wheelwright, 39, Court Street."

[1] Ladies' Night at the Papyrus.—The Ladies' Night entertainment of the Papyrus Club, which has come to be accepted as one of the annual features of that organization, took place at the Revere House last night, and the occasion proved to be one of exceptional interest and brilliancy. The Papyrus includes in its membership a large number of clever men, and, with their guests who assembled last evening to partake of the club's hos-

Thus ran the invitation, which was adorned with a miniature view of the Pyramids in a decorative setting

pitality, the company made up a most delightful and distinguished gathering. The after-dinner exercises, which were not permitted to be reported in full, were of a most entertaining character; the speeches of the distinguished gentlemen guests and the contributions in prose and verse by some of the members of the club, being very bright and enjoyable. The members and their guests assembled in the hotel parlours at six o'clock, where they were received by the president of the club, Mr. George F. Babbitt, assisted by Miss Fay. Music was furnished by the Germania Orchestra, and, after an hour spent in introductory ceremonies, the members and their guests, numbering altogether 120 ladies and gentlemen, proceeded to the dining-hall and sat down to the dinner-table, which was arranged in horseshoe form. The tables were artistically decorated with flowers, and at each plate was placed a dinner-card, bearing the name of each guest, and a *menu* of an exceedingly artistic design, the front cover bearing a photograph of the club paraphernalia, very cleverly grouped, and bearing the inscription: "Papyrus, Ladies' Night. December 15th, MDCCCLXXXIII." President Babbitt sat in the centre, with Miss Fay at his right and Miss Ellen Terry at his left. On either side of the president were seated Miss Alcott, Mr. Joseph Hatton, Dr. Burnett and Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, General Francis A. Walker and Mrs. Walker, Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge, Captain Story, U.S.A.; Mr. Guy Carleton, of New York, editor of *Life*, and Mr. J. A. Mitchell, assistant editor; Rev. and Mrs. Brooke Hereford, Dr. John D. Blake and Mrs. Blake, Mr. W. H. Rideing and Mrs. John Lillie, the author of "Prudence," and Rev. and Mrs. H. B. Carpenter. Among the other members and guests present were Miss Nora Perry and Miss Noble, the author of "A Reverend Idol;" Mr. and Mrs. Robert Grant, Mr. F. J. Stimson, the author of "Guerndale," and Mrs. Stimson; Dr. Harold Williams, the author of "Mr. and Mrs. Morton;" Mr. Arthur Rotch and Mrs. Van Rensselaer, Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Apthorp, Mr. A. H.

of the reed that is familiar to travellers in the Nile valley.

Dodd, Mrs. Dodd, and Miss Dodd; Mr. Henry M. Rodgers and Mr. George Abbot James; Miss Gage, Mr. and Mrs. Howard M. Ticknor, and Mrs. S. A. Bigelow; Mrs. C. H. Washburne, Mr. George Snell, Mrs. Bacon, and Mrs. Charles Whitmore; Mr. Alexander Young, Mr. George Roberts, Mr. John T. Wheelwright, Mr. L. S. Ipsen, Mr. Alexander Browne and Miss Edmundson, Mr. Frank Hill Smith, and Mrs. Henry Fay; Mr. Arlo Bates, Dr. and Mrs. James Chadwick, Colonel Theodore A. Dodge, and Mrs. Crowninshield; Mr. and Mrs. F. P. Vinton, Mr. Francis Peabody, jun.; Mr. Russell Sullivan, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Albert Prince, Miss Minot, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Prince, Mr. and Mrs. F. V. Parker, Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Osgood, Mr. and Mrs. George M. Towle, Mr. H. G. Pickering, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Sayward, and Mrs. R. G. Shaw; Mr. T. O. Langerfelt, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Foote, Mr. Sigourney Butler, Miss Butler, and Miss Shimmin; Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Fitch, Mr. and Mrs. George B. Goodwin, Mr. W. B. Clarke, Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Campbell, Mr. G. W. Chadwick, Mr. Preston, Mr. and Mrs. F. E. Wright, Mrs. G. A. Gibson, Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Scaife, and Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Woods. At the conclusion of the dinner the president proposed the health of the assembled company in the loving-cup, in accordance with a time-honoured custom of the Papyrus, the cup passing from guest to guest until it had made the rounds of the tables. Many of the gentlemen were merrily cheered as they rose to drink from the cup, as were many of the distinguished ladies, who, without rising, simply touched the cup to their lips. After this interesting ceremony had been gone through with, the president welcomed the company in a brief speech, concluding with a toast to the lady guests, which was drunk standing by the gentlemen present. The Rev. H. Bernard Carpenter was called upon to respond to the toast, which he did in a neat speech, in which pleasant allusions were made to the distinguished ladies of the company, and their work. He was followed by Mr. John T. Wheelwright, the secretary of the club, who gave a very bright

Miss Terry concluded to accept, and I had the honour of being her escort. The handsome rooms of

burlesque report of the proceedings of the monthly Papyrus meetings. It was made up of clever imitations of the poetic and prose contributions of the more active members of the Papyrus, and its numerous hits were received with shouts of laughter. Mr. T. R. Sullivan then read a charming bit of prose; and then came a bright and humorous contribution from Mr. Robert Grant, who described, in a very funny way, his experiences as a member of the committee on ladies' night some years ago. It abounded in witty allusions to the antics of some of the members of the club, and, although the names of the characters who figured in the sketch were assumed for the occasion, the references to the members of the club were readily recognized. Mr. Howard M. Ticknor was then introduced, and read a poem addressed to Miss Terry, concluding with a toast in honour of the distinguished lady, the mention of whose name elicited enthusiastic applause. Mr. Joseph Hatton responded handsomely for Miss Terry, thanking the company for their very cordial welcome and the Papyrus for their elegant hospitality. Mr. Arlo Bates read some very pretty songs, and Mr. Guy Carleton responded to a toast in honour of *Life*, the clever New York paper. Mr. W. H. Sayward gave one of his excellent imitations, and the entertainment concluded with the performance of "a burlesque operatic monodrama," entitled "Titi." The sole *dramatis persona*, Titi, was assumed by Mr. Wm. F. Apthorp, who sang and recited the monodrama in costume, being accompanied on the piano by Mr. Arthur Foote. The performance of this bright musical composition occupied nearly half an hour, and it was acted and sung by Mr. Apthorp with exquisite *chic* and drollery, serving as a fitting finale to the very pleasant after-dinner entertainment. The company arose from the tables at about half-past ten o'clock, and soon after separated, many of the gentlemen going to the St. Botolph Club reception to Mr. Irving, which was appointed for eleven o'clock.—*Boston Saturday Evening Gazette.*

the Revere House that were devoted to the service of the club on this occasion were crowded with ladies and gentlemen when we arrived. Among the guests in whom Miss Terry was especially interested were Mrs. Burnett, the author of "Joan" and other remarkable novels; Miss Noble, the author of "A Reverend Idol;" Miss Fay, Mrs. John Lillie, Mrs. Washbourne, and other ladies known to the world of letters. She was surrounded for a long time by changing groups of ladies and gentlemen, who were presented in a pleasant, informal way by Mr. Babbitt, the president of the club, and other of its officers.

The dinner was a dainty repast (one of the special dishes was a "baked English turbot with brown sauce"). The details of it were printed upon a photographic card, which represented the loving-cup, punch-bowl, Papyrus' manuscripts, gavel, pen and ink, and treasure-box of the institution.

During dinner Miss Terry was called upon to sign scores of the *menu* cards with her autograph. Upon many of them she scribbled poetic couplets, Shakespearian and otherwise, and on others quaint, appropriate lines of her own. She captivated the women, all of them. It is easier for a clever woman to excite the admiration of her sex in America than in England. A woman who adorns and lifts the feminine intellect into notice in America excites the admiration rather

than the jealousy of her sisters. American women seem to make a higher claim upon the respect and attention of men than belongs to the ambitious English women, and when one of them rises to distinction they all go up with her. They share in her fame; they do not try to dispossess her of the lofty place upon which she stands. There is a sort of trades-unionism among the women of America in this respect. They hold together in a ring against the so-called lords of creation, and the men are content to accept what appears to be a happy form of petticoat government. So the women of Boston took Ellen Terry to their arms and made much of her.

After dinner the President expressed in quaint terms, the club's welcome of its guests, and the Secretary read the following official and authorized

REPORT OF THE LAST MEETING.

Scene.—*The Banqueting Hall of the Papyrus Club. The members, reclining in the Roman fashion, sip the cool Falernian from richly-chased paterœ, while the noiseless attendants remove the wild Etrusian boar (the only one in the club). The President raps sharply upon the table with his gavel.*

Spurius Lartius (*a provincial guest from a hamlet called New York*).—Truly, Marcenas, the ruler of the feast is a goodly youth; a barbarian by his golden beard, I ween.

Marcenas (*a literary member of the club, who derives his income, in whole or in part, from the fact that his father is working.*)—"Non Anglus sed Angelus." Perhaps, some day. But, mark, he is calling upon a player for a speech, one of a strolling band which hath of late amused the town.

Spurius Lartius.—Me herculi. 'Tis Wyndham. I have seen him oft in Terence's comedy, "Pink Dominoes."

Wyndham arises, pulls down his tunic, and makes a neat speech. (Cheers and applause.)

The President.—Gentlemen, we have among us to-night an inspired Prophet; the Chronicler of the Gospels according to St. Benjamin.

The Prophet arises, takes a stone tablet from his waistcoat pocket, and reads

The Gospel according to St. Benjamin.

Chapter Xiv.

1. And lo! it was the fall of the year, and the greatest fall was that of Benjamin.

2. And his lyre was hushed.

3. Yet he stretched his hand out unto the people and cried, "Lo, I like this! I would rather be put under the people, having the suffrages of a hundred and fifty thousand, than be put over them with the suffrages of a hundred and thirty-five thousand."

4. And the people smote their knees and laughed, and cried "If thou likest it, Benjamin, so we do, also. Go to, and write a Thanksgiving proclamation."

5. And he did.

(*The stone tablet falls upon a finger-bowl with a crash, and the club votes that the Chronicles be printed at the Prophet's expense.*)

SPURIUS LARTIUS.—But who is this man that arises with flashing eye and curling lip? Mayhap he is a Kelt.

MARCENAS.—He is a Kelt, from Keltville, and a poet to boot.

The Poet arises and reads

A BUNCH OF ROSES.

Sweet rose! In thee the summer bides,
Thy deep, red breast a secret hides,
Which none may know but only she
Whose eyes are stars lit up for me.

Red rose! Unto her sweetly speak,
And glow against her burning cheek;
Ah! breathe this in her shell-like ear,—
"Thou makest it summer all the year."

SPURIUS LARTIUS.—I should imagine the rose to be a waiter, from the instruction to "breathe in her shell-like ear."

POET.—A moment. There is a third stanza to this poem, written on receiving the florist's bill:—

Great Scott! List to my heart's dull thud!
Thou hast a dollar cost a bud.
She is now my rival's bride;
Again I'll wear that ulster tried.

The PRESIDENT.—And now the gentleman at the end

of the long table will tell one of his inimitable anecdotes.

The Gentleman at the End of the Long Table.—Trade is so dull now that the anecdote market is overstocked. The *bon-mot* and jest mills are rolling up their products; but middle-men are cautious, and consumers wary. The stock of last year's "chestnuts"[2] is being worked off; and I have one, a little shop-worn, which I have dusted for the occasion:—

The Fable of the Inquisitive old Broker and the Queer Bundle.

An inquisitive old broker noticed a queer bundle upon the lap of a man sitting opposite him in the horse-car. He looked at the bundle, in wonder as to what it might contain, for some minutes; finally, overmastered by curiosity, he inquired:—

"Excuse me, sir; but would you mind telling me what is in that extraordinary bundle?"

"Certainly; a mongoose," replied the man, who was reading "Don't," and learning how to be a real, true gentleman.

"Ah, indeed!" ejaculated the broker, with unslacked curiosity. . . "But what is a mongoose, pray?"

"Something to kill snakes with."

"But why do you wish to kill snakes with a mongoose?" asked the broker.

[2] In America "chestnut" is a slang phrase for an old story.

"My brother has the delirium tremens and sees snakes all the time. I'm going to fix 'em."

"But, my dear sir, the snakes which your brother sees in his delirium are not real snakes, but the figments of his diseased imagination,—not real snakes, sir!"

"Well! this is not a real mongoose."—*Moral. Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies.*

Spurius Lartius.—I always liked the story. My father used to tell it.

Marcenus.—Hush, Spurius; the club *Vers de Société* writer is about to favour us.

The Club Vers de Société Writer.—I have in my pocket some dainty verses. I have long written rondeaux, triolets, and pantouns.

I have, however, lately invented two new metres.

The first is called a "cabriolet," and the other is a combination of a pantoun and a triolet, called a "pantalet." I will read them to you if you will be very, very still, for they are as delicate as porcelain:—

A BRITON'S WAIL IN NEW YORK CITY.

(*A Cabriolet.*)

I hired me a hack,
I cried out "Alack!"
I must dine upon bread;
I gave up my purse.
Never ride in a hack
Unless you are dead;

Then ride in a hearse,
Lying flat on your back,
I hired me a hack!
I would I were dead!

"PELLUCID HER EYE."

(*A Pantalet.*)

But, oh! I was dry,
And the starved dancers crushed,
Till my shirt-front was mushed.
The champagne was dry—
I cannot say why;
But the night-bird was hushed,
Yet the throstle-wits thrushed—
I cannot say why;
(The champagne was dry).

Ah, pellucid her eye!
And her oval cheek flushed
Like a strawberry crushed.
How pellucid her eye!
I cannot say why—
(The champagne was dry).
I sighed, "Let us fly!"
She smiled not nor gushed.
But from me she rushed.
Mayhap I seemed "fly"—
The wine was quite dry.
But pellucid her eye,
I cannot say why.

This report having been voted correct, and ordered to be inscribed on the minutes, Mr. Howard M. Ticknor then recited, with excellent elocutionary point, the following "Greeting to Ellen Terry":—

"Honour," said Cassius, "is my story's theme."
Honour shall best my verse to-night beseem.

For some, how safe, how permanent, how sure!
Written in characters that will endure,
Until this world begins to melt away
And crumble to its ultimate decay.
The picture fades; but colour still is there,
Even in ruin is the statue fair;
The province won, the city burnt or built,
The inwrought consequence of good or guilt,
Shape after epochs to time's latest span,
And link enduringly a man to man.

But he who is himself artist and art,
Whose greatest works are of himself a part;
Who, sculptor, moulds his hand, his form, his face;
Who, painter, on the air his lines must trace.
Musician, make an instrument his voice,
And tell, not write, the melody of his choice;
Whose eloquence of gesture, pose, and eye
Flashes aglow, in instant dark to die;—
Where are for him the honour and the fame
A face on canvas, and perhaps a name
Extolled a while, and then an empty word
At sound of which no real thrill is stirred.

What, then, shall recompense his loss? What make
Atonement for the ignorant future's sake?
What but the tribute of his honour now,
The native wreath to deck his living brow?
Then, as he passes beyond the mortal ken,
His glory shall go with him even then,
Not as a hope, a doubt, and a desire,
But as a spark of his own living fire,
Of his eternal self a priceless part,
Eternal witness to his mind and heart.

And so, to-night, when she who comes from far
To show in one what many women are,
Sits at our board, and makes our evening shine,
Breaks bread with us, and pledges in our wine,
Let us be quick to honour in our guest
So many a phase of life by her expressed.
Portia's most gracious, yet submissive word—
"You are my king, my governor, my lord;"
Her courage, dignity, and force,
Warning the Jew that justice shall have course
The trenchant wit of Beatrice, and her pride,
Her loyalty as friend, her faith as bride;
Letitia's stratagems; the tragic fate
Of sweet Ophelia, crushed by madness' weight.

How many chords of happiness or woe,
Her lips that quiver and her cheeks that glow;
Her speech now clear, now clouded, and her eyes
Filling by turns with anguish, mirth, surprise—
Can wake to throb, again to rest can still—
Potent her power as Prospero's magic will!

Present alone is hers—alone is ours,
Now, while she plants, must we, too, cull the flowers?
For future wreaths she has no time to wait;
Unready now, they are for aye too late.
Now is the moment our regard to show,
Let every face with light of welcome glow;
Let smiles shine forth, glad words be spoken,
Formality for once be broken.
Let hand strike hand, let kerchiefs wave,
Keep not her laurels for her grave;
Twine our proud chaplet for her fair, smooth brow,
And bid her take our share of tribute now;
Then shall it be a recollection dear,
That we to-night greet Ellen Terry here!

III.

Irving, who could not be present at the Papyrus Club (it was one of Miss Terry's "off nights," when either "The Bells" or "Louis XI." was performed), was received at the St. Botolph's Club soon after the Papyrus festivities closed. In the absence of the President, ex-Mayor Green, the Vice-President, and Mr. Secretary Sullivan did the honours of the evening. An interesting meeting on this occasion was the introduction of Irving to Oliver Wendell Holmes, who later, at the *matinée* performance of "Charles the First,"[3]

[3] "In the second act there were occasionally passages where Mr. Irving spoke one or more lines in a manner which so nearly touched the heart with sadness, so closely appealed to the feelings, that nothing but the brilliancy of his art stood between. His interview with Cromwell was something grand. The patience shown could hardly belong to anything less than royalty, and the majestic tone thrown into the line, 'Uncover in the presence of your king,' indicated a conception of conscious authority which could hardly be improved. But by far the greatest artistic triumph was his delivery of the short speech at the close of the third act. The tone in which the lines were spoken was simply grand, and when they were finished the pity of the audience was instinctively bestowed upon the betrayer rather than the betrayed. Miss Terry as the queen won a considerable success. Her sincere love and devotion to the king and her children were exhibited by the finest tokens, and with a simplicity which would not admit the thought of extravagance or affectation. Her appeal to Cromwell for the life of the king was well worthy a queen; but her disdainful refusal of the offer to release him in case he would abdicate was something remarkable and unique.

was quite overcome with the pathos of the play. Apart from the number and enthusiasm of his audiences, Mr. Irving's personal reception by the leading men of Boston—*littérateurs,* professors, and scholars—might well have given point to the few eloquent words which he addressed to the house on the closing performance of "The Bells" and "The Belle's Stratagem." He said,—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have the privilege of thanking you, for myself, and in behalf of my comrades, and especially in behalf of my gifted sister, Miss Ellen Terry, for the way in which you have received our tragedy, comedy, and melodrama. In coming to this country I have often said that I felt I was coming among friends; and I have had abundant and most touching proof that I was right. This I have never felt more truly than in your historic city of New England, which seems a veritable bit of Old England. In this theatre we have been on classic ground, and if we have, while upon these boards, accomplished anything tending, in your opinion, to the advancement of a great art, in which we are all deeply interested, we are more than repaid, and more than content. It affords me great pleasure to tell you that, if all be well, we shall return to Boston in March, when I hope to pre-

But her brightest laurel was won in the final parting with the king, as he went to the execution. The little shriek she utters at the king when he breaks the embrace in which she holds him, appealed directly to the emotions, and seemed to be the cry of a heart that was breaking."—*Boston Post.*

sent, for the first time on our tour, 'Much Ado About Nothing.' And now, ladies and gentlemen, in the names of one and all, I gratefully thank you, and respectfully wish you 'Good-bye and a Merry Christmas.'"

END OF VOL. I.

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